

Case Number:	CM13-0051720		
Date Assigned:	03/31/2014	Date of Injury:	07/07/2010
Decision Date:	04/26/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/22/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/14/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 44-year-old female with a 7/7/10 date of injury. At the time (10/14/13) of request for authorization for cervical epidural steroid injection at C4-5 and C5-6 under fluoroscopy and anesthesia x3, there is documentation of subjective (neck and right upper extremity pain) and objective (limited range of motion in the neck where extension causes dizziness) findings, current diagnoses (cervical radiculopathy and muscle spasm), and treatment to date (cervical epidural steroid injection, activity modification, physical therapy, and medications). Medical report identifies that the patient underwent a C4-5, C5-6 epidural steroid injection on 7/9/13 with un-quantified pain relief. There is no documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

CERVICAL EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION AT C4-5 AND C5-6 UNDER FLUOROSCOPY AND ANESTHESIA X3: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTIONS (ESIs).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 175. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation OFFICIAL DISABILITY

GUIDELINES (ODG), NECK & UPPER BACK CHAPTER, EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTIONS (ESIs)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. In addition, MTUS does not support a "series-of-three" injections. ODG identifies documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of additional epidural steroid injections. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of cervical radiculopathy and muscle spasm. However, despite documentation of a previous cervical epidural steroid injection with unquantified pain relief, there is no documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response following previous injection. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for cervical epidural steroid injection at C4-5 and C5-6 under fluoroscopy and anesthesia x3 is not medically necessary.