

Case Number:	CM13-0056268		
Date Assigned:	12/30/2013	Date of Injury:	04/17/2013
Decision Date:	03/19/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/20/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/22/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Psychology 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 physician 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:

The claimant is a 63 year-old female (██████████) with a date of injury of 4/17/13. According to medical reports, the claimant sustained injury to her psyche when she was robbed at gunpoint while working in the jewelry department for ██████████. In his "Primary Treating Physician's Initial Evaluation" dated 5/2/13 and in subsequent reports, ██████████ diagnosed the claimant with an Acute Stress Disorder. She has been treated by ██████████ and/or ██████████ with psychotherapy and biofeedback.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Six (6) sessions of biofeedback: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG-TWC Mental Illness & Stress Procedure

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Biofeedback Page(s): 24-25.

Decision rationale: The claimant has been receiving psychotherapy and biofeedback from ██████████ and/or ██████████ since her initial evaluation dated 5/2/13. It appears that the claimant has completed four (4) sets of six (6) psychotherapy sessions for a total of twenty-four (24) sessions to date. She had been receiving biofeedback sessions in conjunction with the psychotherapy;

however, the exact number of completed biofeedback sessions is unknown. The Chronic Pain Guidelines recommend a total of six to ten (6-10) biofeedback sessions, and suggest that further sessions can be done at home. Given that the claimant has exceeded the total number of sessions as recommended by the guidelines, and she has not been able to demonstrate consistent improvement as a result of the completed sessions, the request for additional sessions is not substantiated. As a result, the request for an additional "6 sessions of biofeedback" is not medically necessary.

Six (6) sessions of extended session psychotherapy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/biofeedback/MY01072> (last updated 01/26/2013)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Mental illness and stress chapter, Cognitive therapy for PTSD

Decision rationale: The claimant has been receiving psychotherapy and biofeedback from [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED] since her initial evaluation dated 5/2/13. It appears that the claimant has completed four (4) sets of six (6) psychotherapy sessions for a total of twenty-four (24) sessions to date. She also received some biofeedback sessions in conjunction with the cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) psychotherapy sessions. According to the medical records, the claimant continues to struggle with many of her symptoms. The Official Disability Guidelines indicate that extremely severe cases of combined depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may require more sessions if documented that CBT is being done and progress is being made. Psychotherapy lasting for at least a year, or fifty (50) sessions, is more effective than shorter-term psychotherapy for patients with complex mental disorders, according to a meta-analysis of twenty-three (23) trials. The claimant meets the criteria for a complex case and should be afforded more than the twenty-four (24) sessions that she has completed. Therefore, the request for "6 sessions of extended session psychotherapy" appears reasonable and is medically necessary.