

Case Number:	CM13-0064705		
Date Assigned:	01/03/2014	Date of Injury:	01/13/2002
Decision Date:	05/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/07/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/12/2013

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 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and is licensed to practice in Illinois. 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:

The injured worker is a 40-year-old female who reported an injury on January 13, 2002. The injury occurred when the injured worker was moving an elderly patient from a computed tomography (CT) table to a gurney. The documentation from October 14, 2013 revealed that the injured worker had a lumbar sympathetic block on the left side on October 11, 2013, which improved the pain relief by 80%. The injured worker had a significant reduction in left leg pain. It was indicated that the injured worker's current report of pain was 0 to 4 with increased mobility. The injured worker's pain at the start of the procedure was 8 to 9 with difficulty with almost all mobility. The injured worker was noting increased spasms in the back. The injured worker's diagnoses included lumbar facet syndrome and reflex sympathetic dystrophy, not elsewhere classified. The treatment plan included a stellate ganglion block and medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK OF THE LEFT LUMBAR SPINE: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) Page(s): 103.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Stellate Ganglion Block Page(s): 103. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability

Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), sympathetic blocks (therapeutic).

Decision rationale: The California MTUS Guidelines indicate that stellate ganglion blocks are appropriate for the treatment of CRPS. There is limited evidence to support a stellate ganglion block. As there were no specific guidelines for repeat injections, secondary guidelines were sought. According to the Official Disability Guidelines, repeat blocks should only be undertaken if there is evidence of increased range of motion, pain and medication use reduction, and increased tolerance of activity and touch is documented to permit participation in physical therapy or occupational therapy. There should be evidence that physical and occupational therapy is incorporated with a duration of symptom relief of the block during the therapeutic phase. The clinical documentation submitted for review indicated that the injured worker had 80% relief of pain. There was a lack of documentation of objective increase in range of motion, an objective decrease in pain medications and documentation that permitted the injured worker to participate in physical therapy or occupational therapy. Additionally, there was no documentation indicating the injured worker had an incorporation of physical and occupational therapy for the duration of symptom relief. Given the above, the request for a stellate ganglion block of the left lumbar spine is not medically necessary.