

Case Number:	CM14-0000733		
Date Assigned:	01/17/2014	Date of Injury:	07/10/2013
Decision Date:	07/02/2014	UR Denial Date:	12/26/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/02/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular 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:

██████████ is a 34 year old woman who sustained a work related injury on July 10 2013. Subsequently, she developed pain in both forearms and hands. According to a note dated on November 7 2013, the patient was reported to have bilateral upper extremity tendinitis that failed 6 sessions of physical therapy as well as Neurontin. Her physical examination was normal and did not demonstrate any signs of compression. According to the note of October 11, 2013, the patient was doing well without paresthesia. Her EMG performed on September 11 2013 was reported negative. Her examination showed some soreness and limitation to flexion extension in her wrist. Her provider requested authorization to perform additional 12 sessions of hand physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

HAND THERAPY QUANTITY: 12: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines PHYSICAL MEDICINE Page(s): 98-99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Physical Medicine is Recommended as indicated below. Passive therapy (those treatment modalities that do not require energy expenditure on the part of the patient) can provide short term relief during the early phases of pain treatment and are directed at controlling symptoms such as pain, inflammation and swelling

and to improve the rate of healing soft tissue injuries. They can be used sparingly with active therapies to help control swelling, pain and inflammation during the rehabilitation process. Active therapy is based on the philosophy that therapeutic exercise and/or activity are beneficial for restoring flexibility, strength, endurance, function, range of motion, and can alleviate discomfort. Active therapy requires an internal effort by the individual to complete a specific exercise or task. This form of therapy may require supervision from a therapist or medical provider such as verbal, visual and/or tactile instruction(s). Patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. Home exercise can include exercise with or without mechanical assistance or resistance and functional activities with assistive devices. (Colorado, 2002) (Airaksinen, 2006) Patient-specific hand therapy is very important in reducing swelling, decreasing pain, and improving range of motion in CRPS. (Li, 2005) The use of active treatment modalities (e.g., exercise, education, activity modification) instead of passive treatments is associated with substantially better clinical outcomes. In a large case series of patients with low back pain treated by physical therapists, those adhering to guidelines for active rather than passive treatments incurred fewer treatment visits, cost less, and had less pain and less disability. The overall success rates were 64.7% among those adhering to the active treatment recommendations versus 36.5% for passive treatment. (Fritz, 2007). According to the patient file, the patient underwent 6 physical therapy sessions without full relief with probably residual tendinitis. On November follow up, the patient was reported to have wrist pain and limitation of movement with normal physical examination and normal EMG. This could be related to a residual tendinitis that could benefit from more sessions of physical therapy. However there is no rationale from prescribing 12 sessions of physical therapy. An addition of 6 sessions or less of physical therapy is a reasonable alternative. If after performing these sessions, a functional improvement is documented, more physical therapy sessions could be considered. Therefore the request for 12 additional sessions of Hand Therapy is not medically necessary.