

Case Number:	CM14-0108815		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	07/28/2011
Decision Date:	10/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/14/2014

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 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:

The applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of July 28, 2011. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representations; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; and unspecified amounts of physical therapy over the life of the claim. In a Utilization Review Report dated June 24, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for platelet-rich plasma injection/tendon injection, an auto tissue graft, and two venous punctures. The applicant was status post left knee arthroscopy, it was acknowledged, and had received a platelet-rich plasma injection to the knee some three months prior. The applicant stated that the injection may have helped somewhat. In a progress note dated February 10, 2014, the applicant was described as having persistent complaints of knee pain status post earlier knee surgery. The applicant continued to have weakness and difficulty with certain types of motion. The applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. On April 17, 2014, it was suggested that the applicant had had 45 sessions of physical therapy through that point in time. In a June 2, 2014 progress note, the applicant reported persistent complaints of knee pain. The applicant had significant atrophy about the thigh. The attending provider suggested that the applicant pursue a series of three PRP injections. Authorization for two additional sessions was sought some three weeks after the applicant had had a previous injection. The applicant exhibited slight limp with some significant quadriceps atrophy noted on exam. The applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. The applicant was asked to employ oxycodone and Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Platelet-Rich Plasma Injection/Tendon Injection - Two (2) additional injections: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 339. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Online, Knee Chapter: Platelet-rich plasma (PRP), http://www.uwhealth.org/files/uwhealth/docs/sportsmed/sports_med_PRP.pdf, <http://www.aaos.org/news/aaosnow/sep10/clinical2.asp>

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints.

Decision rationale: The MTUS does not address the topic of platelet-rich plasma injections for knee tendonitis, the diagnosis seemingly present here. As noted in the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter, there is no recommendation for or against usage of platelet-rich plasma injections with and without autologous blood for the treatment of patellar tendinopathy, the issue reportedly present here. The applicant has, however, had one prior platelet-rich plasma injection, in spite of the tepid ACOEM position on the procedure in question. There has, however, been no demonstration of functional improvement following completion of the same. The applicant remains off of work, on total temporary disability, remains highly reliant and highly dependent on various opioid medications, including Norco and oxycodone. Continuing platelet-rich plasma injections is not indicated without some demonstration of a favorable response to the earlier injection. It is further noted that, contrary to what was suggested by the attending provider, ACOEM does not take any particular position on what the optimal frequency for platelet-rich plasma injections is, nor the ACOEM does state what the optimal response time is, citing a lack of quality studies on the same. However, the applicant's remaining off of work, on total temporary disability and continued dependence on opioid treatment despite the earlier platelet-rich plasma injection, taken together, do suggest that said injection was unsuccessful in terms of functional parameters established in MTUS 9792.20f. Therefore, the request for Platelet-Rich Plasma Injection/Tendon Injection - Two (2) additional injections is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Auto Tissue Graft - Two (2) times: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.

Venous puncture - Two (2) times: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.