

Case Number:	CM14-0109720		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	05/15/2010
Decision Date:	08/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/03/2014
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 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 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 claimant is a 38 year-old female (██████████) with a date of injury of 5/15/10. The claimant sustained injury to her neck, upper extremities, hands, and wrists as the result of repetitive motions. In his PR-2 report dated 2/27/14, ██████████ diagnosed the claimant with Bilateral radial tunnel syndrome. It is also reported that she sustained an injury to her psyche as the result of a hostile work place in which she was constantly critiqued for her clothing, her tires were slashed, and her car was keyed while in the parking lot. The claimant sustained these injuries while working for the ██████████. It is reported that the claimant was referred to psychologist, ██████████ however, there are no reports from ██████████ included for review. The Utilization Review/Peer Review Report dated 7/3/14 indicates that the claimant has been diagnosed with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Sixteen (16) Individual Psychotherapy Sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Psychological Treatment. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Cognitive Therapy for PTSD.

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 depression Recommended. Cognitive behavior therapy for depression is recommended based on meta-analyses that compare its use with pharmaceuticals. Cognitive behavior therapy fared as well as antidepressant medication with severely depressed outpatients in four major comparisons. Effects may be longer lasting (80% relapse rate with antidepressants versus 25% with psychotherapy). (Paykel, 2006) (Bockting, 2006) (DeRubeis, 1999) (Goldapple, 2004) It also fared well in a meta-analysis comparing 78 clinical trials from 1977 -1996. (Gloaguen, 1998) In another study, it was found that combined therapy (antidepressant plus psychotherapy) was found to be more effective than psychotherapy alone. (Thase, 1997) A recent high quality study concluded that a substantial number of adequately treated patients did not respond to antidepressant therapy. (Corey-Lisle, 2004) A recent meta-analysis concluded that psychological treatment combined with antidepressant therapy is associated with a higher improvement rate than drug treatment alone. In longer therapies, the addition of psychotherapy helps to keep patients in treatment. (Pampallona, 2004) For panic disorder, cognitive behavior therapy is more effective and more cost-effective than medication. (Royal Australian, 2003) The gold standard for the evidence-based treatment of MDD is a combination of medication (antidepressants) and psychotherapy. The primary forms of psychotherapy that have been most studied through research are: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy. (Warren, 2005) Delivering cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) by telephone is as effective as delivering it face-to-face in the short term, and telephone therapy is safe and has a higher patient retention rate. The attrition rate from psychotherapy can exceed 50% due to time constraints, lack of available and accessible services, transportation problems, and cost. Significantly fewer participants receiving telephone CBT discontinued their therapy than did those receiving face-to-face CBT. Both treatment groups showed significant improvement in depression, and there were no significant treatment differences when measured at posttreatment between telephone and face-to-face CBT. However, face-to-face CBT was significantly superior to telephone CBT during the follow-up period. The RCT used 18 sessions of either telephone CBT or face-to-face CBT. (Mohr, 2012) Psychotherapy visits are generally separate from physical therapy visits. ODG Psychotherapy Guidelines: Initial trial of 6 visits over 6 weeks With evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 13-20 visits over 13-20 weeks (individual sessions) PTSD psychotherapy interventions Recommended as indicated below. Providers should explain to all patients with PTSD the range of available and effective therapeutic options for PTSD. Cognitive Therapy (CT), (e.g., ET plus).

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address the treatment of depression nor PTSD therefore, the Official Disability Guidelines regarding the cognitive treatment of depression and the treatment of PTSD will be used as references for this case. Based on the very limited medical records submitted, the claimant is experiencing symptoms related to depression and PTSD. Because there were no psychological records included for review, the need for individual psychotherapy sessions cannot be fully determined. Additionally, the request for an initial 16 sessions exceeds the initial number of psychotherapy visits set forth by the ODG. As a result, the request for Sixteen (16) Individual Psychotherapy Sessions are not medically necessary. It is noted that the claimant received a modified authorization for 6 individual psychotherapy sessions in response to this request.