

Case Number:	CM14-0012154		
Date Assigned:	02/21/2014	Date of Injury:	03/20/2012
Decision Date:	07/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/30/2014

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:

This patient is a 44-year-old female who has submitted a claim for left ankle sprain / strain, rule out internal derangement; cervical radiculitis, bilateral posterior shoulder strain, and lumbar instability with disc protrusion associated with an industrial injury date of 03/20/2012. Medical records from 2013 were reviewed. Patient complained of left ankle pain when she tripped resulting to numbness and dragging of her foot. Aggravating factor included increased weightbearing, such as walking. Physical examination showed tenderness at the lateral aspect of left ankle. Range of motion was restricted. MRI of the left ankle, dated 11/13/2013, showed small retrotalar effusion. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, use of a TENS unit, acupuncture, and medications. Utilization review from 01/14/2014 denied the request for MRI of the left ankle without contrast because there was no indication that other recommended conservative care was rendered.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGES OF LEFT ANKLE WITHOUT CONTRAST:

Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Foot and Ankle Chapter, Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 372-374. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Foot and Ankle Chapter, Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS ACOEM Guideline states that disorders of soft tissue (such as tendinitis, metatarsalgia, fasciitis, and neuroma) yield negative radiographs and do not warrant other studies, e.g., magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Magnetic resonance imaging may be helpful to clarify a diagnosis such as osteochondritis dissecans in cases of delayed recovery. In addition, ODG states that ankle MRI is indicated with chronic ankle pain, pain of uncertain etiology, and when plain films are normal. In this case, patient complained of left ankle pain associated with numbness and dragging of her foot. Aggravating factor included increased weightbearing, such as walking. Physical examination showed tenderness and restricted range of motion. Patient was diagnosed with left ankle sprain / strain. Conservative management to the left ankle was not documented. Moreover, previous MRI of the left ankle was already accomplished on 11/13/2013, showing small retrotalar effusion. There is no worsening of symptoms or new injury which may warrant a repeat MRI at this time. There is likewise no comprehensive physical examination available for review. The medical necessity was not established. Therefore, the request for MRI of the left ankle without contrast is not medically necessary.