

Case Number:	CM14-0013612		
Date Assigned:	02/26/2014	Date of Injury:	07/01/2009
Decision Date:	07/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/03/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in Tennessee. 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 patient is a 51-year-old female who has submitted a claim for left carpal tunnel syndrome status post carpal tunnel release associated with an industrial injury date of 07/01/2009. Medical records from 01/09/2013 to 01/15/2014 were reviewed and showed that patient complained of left wrist pain graded 4/10 with numbness, stiffness and radiation to the fingers except the left thumb. Physical examination revealed a well-healed incision scar and tenderness to palpation over the left wrist. Mild limitation with wrist flexion and left volar ganglion cyst was noted. Electromyography/Nerve conduction velocity study of bilateral upper extremities dated 04/27/2012 revealed mild left carpal tunnel syndrome. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the left wrist dated 07/22/2012 revealed ganglion cyst, degenerative changes at 1st carpal metacarpal joint and scarring of the scapholunate ligament. Treatment to date has included left carpal tunnel release (08/07/2013), physical therapy, post-operative occupational therapy, home exercise program, Motrin and Hydrocodone. Utilization review, dated 01/22/2014, denied the request for durable medical equipment (DME) electrical stimulator because there was no clinical indication for electrical stimulator device.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Durable medical equipment (DME) Electrical Stimulator: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Interferential Current Stimulation (ICS).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: According to pages 114-116 of California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration. TENS is recommended as a treatment option for acute post-operative pain in the first 30 days post-surgery. It has been shown to be of lesser effect, or not at all for other orthopedic surgical procedures. The proposed necessity of the unit should be documented upon request. In this case, there was no documentation of active post-operative functional restoration. Furthermore, the patient was beyond 30 days post-orthopedic surgical procedure. There was no discussion as to why electrical stimulation was needed. The request likewise failed to specify body part to be treated, and if the device is for rental or purchase. Therefore, the request for durable medical equipment (DME) Electrical Stimulator is not medically necessary.