

Case Number:	CM14-0110739		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	08/02/2004
Decision Date:	10/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/16/2014

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 Anesthesia, has a subspecialty in Acupuncture and Pain 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:

66 year old female injured worker with date of injury 8/2/04 with related back pain. Per progress report dated 5/27/14, the injured worker complained of persistent pain in the lower back. Per physical exam, limited range of motion of the lumbar spine was noted, there was tenderness to the paraspinal musculature bilaterally right greater than the left, Kemp's sign was positive bilaterally, straight leg raising test was positive on the right. There was decreased strength and sensation 4/5 on the right at L4, L5, and S1, and normal strength and sensation 5/5 on the left at L4, L5, and S1. Treatment to date has included physical therapy and medication management.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the Lumbar Spine: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177.

Decision rationale: ACOEM guidelines support ordering of imaging studies for emergence of red flags, physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery, and clarification of the anatomy prior to an

invasive procedure. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination, electrodiagnostic studies, laboratory tests, or bone scans. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Electromyography (EMG), and nerve conduction velocities (NCV), including H-reflex tests, may help identify subtle focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with neck or arm symptoms, or both, lasting more than three or four weeks. The documentation submitted for review notes weakness and numbness. The request is medically necessary.