

Case Number:	CM14-0122279		
Date Assigned:	08/06/2014	Date of Injury:	08/28/2008
Decision Date:	09/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/01/2014

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 Georgia. 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 55 year old female presenting with chronic pain following a work related injury on 12/01/01. The claimant was diagnosed with right carpal tunnel syndrome and underwent surgical intervention followed by cervical spine surgery on 01/21/2014 for cervical radiculopathy, degenerative disc disease of the lumbar spine at the L2 through L5 levels. MRI of the lumbar spine on 8/9/2013 showed L2-3 4 mm retrolisthesis with a 2 mm posterior disc bulge and congenital spinal canal narrowing, L3-4 congenital spinal canal stenosis. On 5/29/2014, the physical exam showed significant limitations in range of motion, tenderness in the lumbosacral spine, positive straight leg raise, weakness in the right ankle dorsiflexion. The claimant has tried triggering point injections. According to the medical records, the claimant is temporarily very disabled. A claim was made for lumbar facet injections at L2-3 and L3-4.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Facet Injection L2-L3, L3-L4: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines- low back chapter.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Complaints, Treatment Consideration.

Decision rationale: Facet Injection L2-L3, L3-L4 is not medically necessary. The Occupation medicine practice guidelines criteria for use of diagnostic facet blocks require: that the clinical presentation be consistent with facet pain; Treatment is also limited to patients with low back pain that is nonradicular and had no more than 2 levels bilaterally; documentation of failed conservative therapy including home exercise physical therapy and NSAID is required at least 4-6 weeks prior to the diagnostic facet block; no more than 2 facet joint levels are injected at one session; recommended by them of no more than 0.5 cc of injective was given to each joint; no pain medication from home should be taken for at least 4 hours prior to the diagnostic block and for 4-6 hours afterward; opioid should not be given as a sedative during the procedure; the use of IV sedation (including other agents such as modafinil) may interfere with the result of the diagnostic block, and should only be given in cases of extreme anxiety; the patient should document pain relief with the management such as VAS scale, emphasizing the importance of recording the maximum pain relief and maximum duration of pain. The patient should also keep medication use and activity level to support subjective reports of better pain control; diagnostic blocks should not be performed in patients in whom a surgical procedure anticipated; diagnostic facet block should not be performed patients who have had a previous fusion procedure at the plan injection level. There is no documentation of failed conservative therapy and the physical exam does not clearly indicate facet pain; therefore, the requested procedure is not medically necessary.