

Case Number:	CM14-0133145		
Date Assigned:	08/22/2014	Date of Injury:	04/13/2011
Decision Date:	10/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/12/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/20/2014

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 a licensed Acupuncturist and is licensed to practice in Florida. 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 48-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 4/13/11 to her hands, wrists and neck. The mechanism of the injury is unknown. The patient was diagnosed with: Bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, Left dorsal ganglion cyst, bilateral cubital tunnel syndrome and cervical spine DJD. The records indicate the patient has received acupuncture, bilateral carpal tunnel injections, wrist braces, home exercise programs for strengthening and stretching, medications (Ibuprofen and Prilosec) and PT. After reviewing the documentation provided, the records fail to demonstrate any clinical evidence of functional improvement with the prior course of acupuncture treatment provided. The medical necessity for the requested 12 acupuncture sessions for the cervical spine and bilateral elbows has not been established.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture, cervical spine bilateral elbows: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The patient is a 48-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 4/13/11 to her hands, wrists and neck. The mechanisms of the injuries are unknown at this time.

She had previously been authorized to receive 12 acupuncture treatments for the cervical spine and bilateral elbows. She was given a home stretching and strengthening exercise program, and wrist braces. She was taking medication to relieve symptoms and received carpal tunnel injections. The patient also had PT. As per CA MTUS Acupuncture Medical Treatment Guidelines (9792.24.1) Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced or not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to expedite functional recovery. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented as defined in Section 9792.20 CA MTUS Acupuncture Guidelines requires clinical evidence of functional improvement for additional care to be considered. CA Acupuncture guidelines cited, 9792.24.1 states that the time to produce significant improvement is 3-6 treatments. It also states that acupuncture may be extended if functional improvement is documented including significant improvement in activities of daily living, reduction of work restriction, and reduction of dependency on continued medical treatment. The current documentation does not provide information that the patient received any benefit from the previous acupuncture sessions, and the objective findings from the provider are unknown. Therefore, the request for 12 acupuncture treatments for the cervical spine and bilateral elbows would not be medically necessary.