

Case Number:	CM14-0164407		
Date Assigned:	10/09/2014	Date of Injury:	10/03/2003
Decision Date:	11/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/07/2014

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 Orthopaedic Surgery (Spine Fellowship) 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 59-year-old female with a 10/3/03 date of injury, and C4-5 cervical fusion in 1997, C5-6 cervical fusion in 2000, and C3-4 cervical fusion in 2005. At the time (9/8/14) of the Decision for permanent placement of spinal cord stimulator, there is documentation of subjective (neck pain) and objective (tenderness over the paracervicals, trapezius, and levator scapulae, decreased range of motion with pain, and positive Spurling's test) findings, current diagnoses (cervical spondylosis without myelopathy, degeneration of cervical intervertebral disc, and neck pain), and treatment to date (medications, physical therapy, and spinal cord stimulator trial (2012)). Medical reports identify that the spinal cord stimulator trial provide 75% pain relief and helped decrease the patient's need for pain medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Permanent Placement of Spinal Cord Stimulator: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Spinal Cord Stimulators (SCS).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines spinal cord stimulators (SCS) Page(s): 105-107. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter, Spinal cord stimulators (SCS)

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of failed back syndrome (persistent pain in patients who have undergone at least one previous back operation), primarily lower extremity pain, less invasive procedures have failed or are contraindicated, and a psychological evaluation prior to a trial, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of spinal cord stimulation in the management of failed back syndrome. In addition, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies that SCS is recommended as a treatment option for adults with chronic neuropathic pain lasting at least 6 months despite appropriate conventional medical management, and who have had a successful trial of stimulation, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of permanent spinal cord stimulation. ODG identifies documentation of 50% pain relief and medication reduction or functional improvement after temporary trial, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of permanent spinal cord stimulation. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of cervical spondylosis without myelopathy, degeneration of cervical intervertebral disc, and neck pain. In addition there is documentation of chronic neuropathic pain lasting at least 6 months despite appropriate conventional medical management. Furthermore, there is documentation that the spinal cord stimulator trial provided 75% pain relief and helped decrease the patient's need for pain medications. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for permanent placement of spinal cord stimulator is medically necessary.