

Case Number:	CM14-0169356		
Date Assigned:	10/17/2014	Date of Injury:	04/23/2012
Decision Date:	11/19/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/14/2014

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 Orthopedic Spinal Surgeon and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 injured worker has chronic neck pain. The injured worker also has chronic back pain. There is a history of shoulder pain. Physical examination shows his cervical spine has tenderness palpation of the posterior cervical muscles and trapezius muscles. Axial loading compression test and Spurling tests are positive. There is a painful range of neck motion. There is dysesthesia at C5-C6 and C7 dermatomes. Physical examination of the lumbar spine shows mild tenderness to the lumbar palpation. There is pain with lumbar motion. Seated nerve root test is positive. There is dysesthesia Z. L5 and S1 dermatomes right greater than left. The injured worker is diagnosed with cervical and lumbar discopathy. At issue is whether anesthesia care and epidurography is medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Monitored Anesthesia Care.: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Treatment for Workers Compensation, Pain Procedure Summary (updated 07/10/2014), Sedation for Epidural Steroid Injections.

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 Chapter.

Decision rationale: This injured worker does not meet criteria for monitored anesthesia care. Specifically the injured worker has chronic back pain and neck pain without evidence of significant radiculopathy into either region that correlates with imaging study showing specific compression of nerve roots or the spinal cord. In addition there is no clear documentation the medical records of adequate recent attempts at conservative measures to include physical therapy. There are no red flag indicators for spinal intervention such as fracture, tumor, or progressive neurologic deficit. There is no need for this injured worker to have anesthesia for chronic neck or back pain. The request for Monitored Anesthesia Care is not medically necessary.

Epidurography: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Eur Spine J.2010 Sep;19(9):1479-93.doi: 10.1007/s00586-010-1469-8. Epub 2010 May 29. Caudal Epidurals.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: ODG low back pain chapter

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines do not recommend epidurography for patients who have chronic back her neck pain without evidence of myelopathy or significant nerve root compression that correlates with physical exam findings showing specific radiculopathy or myelopathy. This injured worker does not have physical exam findings documenting severe neurologic deficit or imaging studies showing severe compression of the spinal cord or nerve roots that correlate with physical exam findings. The request for Epidurography is not medically necessary.