

Case Number:	CM14-0170832		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2014	Date of Injury:	09/15/2009
Decision Date:	11/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/15/2014

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 Medicine 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 injured worker is a 58 year old female presenting with work-related injury on 09/15/09. On August 2, 2014, the injured worker complained of back pain. The pain is described as burning, throbbing, shooting, worse twisting, bending, activity, and lifting. The pain radiates to the bilateral leg, hip and pelvis. The injured worker's medications included Diazepam, Lidocaine patch, Gabapentin, Methimazole, Metoprolol and Diovan. The physical exam showed tenderness over the T6-7 and T10-11. The injured worker diagnosed with Cervical Spondylosis without Myelopathy, lumbago, lumbar disc disorder, lumbosacral spondylosis, thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis, thoracic pain, cervicalgia, cervical disc disorder, cervical postlaminectomy syndrome, myalgia and myositis and chronic pain syndrome. The injured worker tried epidural and facet injections. A prior thoracic radiofrequency ablation provided 80 percent reduction of pain relief for 1 year. A claim was made for thoracic facet injections with sedation under fluoroscopy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Thoracic Facets with Sedation under Fluoroscopy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 301. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back, Facet Joint Injections, Thoracic; Facet Joint Diagnostic Blocks (Injections).

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

Decision rationale: Thoracic Facets with sedation under fluoroscopy 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 cervical 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 injectate 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 surgical procedures anticipated; diagnostic facet block should not be performed in patients who have had a previous fusion procedure at the plan injection level. The physical exam does not clearly indicate facet pain and this procedure is not recommended with sedation; therefore the requested procedure is not medically necessary.