

Case Number:	CM14-0172133		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2014	Date of Injury:	01/06/2009
Decision Date:	11/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/23/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/17/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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:

Medical records reflect the claimant is a 60 year old female who sustained a work injury on 1-6-09. On this date, the claimant tripped and fell, twisting her right knee. Medical Records reflect the claimant complaints of bilateral knee pain and low back. She has undergone left knee surgery and underwent approximately 99 postop physical therapy sessions. It was noted the claimant uses a cane. She has an MRI of the right knee that shows degenerative medical changes and patellar chondromalacia. The claimant had been treated with anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy and activity modification. There has been a request for arthroscopic surgery to the right knee, which was denied.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right Knee Synvisc Injection: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee chapter - Hyaluronic acid injections

Decision rationale: ODG notes that Criteria for Hyaluronic acid injections:- Patients experience significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis but have not responded adequately to recommended conservative nonpharmacologic (e.g., exercise) and pharmacologic treatments or are intolerant of these therapies (e.g., gastrointestinal problems related to anti-inflammatory medications), after at least 3 months;- Documented symptomatic severe osteoarthritis of the knee, which may include the following: Bony enlargement; Bony tenderness; Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion; Less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness; No palpable warmth of synovium; Over 50 years of age.- Pain interferes with functional activities (e.g., ambulation, prolonged standing) and not attributed to other forms of joint disease;- Failure to adequately respond to aspiration and injection of intra-articular steroids;- Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance;- Are not currently candidates for total knee replacement or who have failed previous knee surgery for their arthritis, unless younger patients wanting to delay total knee replacement. (Wen, 2000)- Hyaluronic acid injections are not recommended for any other indications such as chondromalacia patellae, facet joint arthropathy, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral arthritis, patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain), plantar nerve entrapment syndrome, or for use in joints other than the knee (e.g., ankle, carpo-metacarpal joint, elbow, hip, metatarsophalangeal joint, shoulder, and temporomandibular joint) because the effectiveness of hyaluronic acid injections for these indications has not been established. ODG notes that Hyaluronic acid injections are not recommended for any other indications such as chondromalacia patellae, facet joint arthropathy, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral arthritis, patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain), plantar nerve entrapment syndrome, or for use in joints other than the knee. There must be documentation of bony enlargement; bony tenderness; Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion; less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness; and no palpable warmth of synovium. There is an absence in documentation noting that this claimant meets ODG criteria for hyaluronic acid injections, as noted above. Her MRI shows patellar chondromalacia, which is one of the contraindications. Therefore, the medical necessity of this request is not established.