

Case Number:	CM14-0031276		
Date Assigned:	06/20/2014	Date of Injury:	05/14/2012
Decision Date:	07/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	02/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/12/2014

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:

The injured worker is a 54 year old female who reported an injury to her elbows. The clinical documentation submitted for review revealed no information regarding the mechanism of injury. A clinical note dated 9/18/13 indicated the injured worker complaining of bilateral lateral elbow pain. The injured worker rated the pain at 2/10. The injured worker described the pain as a throbbing dull sensation with an aching and pressure rake. Tenderness to palpation was identified at the lateral epicondyles of both elbows as well as the medial epicondyle on the left. Strength deficits were identified at the left elbow with extension and with left sided grip strength. A clinical note dated 10/22/13 indicated the injured worker underwent acupuncture treatments at the bilateral elbows. The injured worker rated ongoing pain at 1/10. A clinical note dated 10/29/13 indicated the injured worker continuing with low level of pain that was attributed to the use of acupuncture treatments. A clinical note dated 12/14/13 indicated the injured worker continued with complaints of symptoms at both elbows and shoulders. The injured worker complained of symptoms left greater on the left than right. The injured worker was recommended for extracorporeal shockwave therapy. The qualified medical evaluation dated 2/16/14 indicated the injured worker continuing with complaints of lateral epicondylitis. The injured worker was recommended for post-operative treat therapy. A clinical note dated 2/4/14 indicated the injured worker continuing with mild pain and numbness that was rated 1/10 at both elbows. The injured worker continued to describe the pain as a throbbing dull sensation. Minimal strength deficits were identified with left elbow extension and grip strength.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Extra corporeal shock wave therapy with anesthesia for the bilateral elbow x 2: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 10 Elbow Disorders (Revised 2007).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Use of extracorporeal shock wave therapy is indicated as an outlier to guideline recommendations provided that the injured worker meets specific criteria, including completion of a six month course of standard treatments. The injured worker underwent physical therapy and acupuncture treatments. However, it is unclear if the injured worker completed a full six month course of care. It should also be pointed out that no high quality studies currently exist supporting the use of extracorporeal shock wave therapy at the elbow as previous trials have yielded conflicting results. Given this, the request is not indicated as medically necessary.