

Case Number:	CM14-0033922		
Date Assigned:	06/20/2014	Date of Injury:	04/08/2010
Decision Date:	07/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/18/2014

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 Licensed in Chiropractic and Acupuncture 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:

The injured worker is a 54-year-old female who reported right hand and wrist pain from injury sustained on 04/08/10 due to cumulative trauma of repetitive typing. There were no diagnostic imaging reports. Patient is diagnosed with carpometacarpal (CMC) joint arthrosis of the thumb and de Quervain's tendinitis. Patient has been treated with medication, therapy and acupuncture. The patient was seen for a total of 24 acupuncture visits. Per medical notes dated 10/10/13, patient complains of right wrist pain. Pain is rated at 8/10 and described as throbbing, shooting, sharp, severe and constant. Pain is severe when she is very active. Per medical notes dated 02/27/14, patient reports mild discomfort and pain in her wrist. Pain is rated at 4/10. She states overall the pain is better. Patient states that she has relief with acupuncture. Primary physician is requesting additional 8 acupuncture sessions. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 sessions of acupuncture to the right hand/wrist (2x4): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines page 8-9.

"Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". "Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Per medical notes dated 02/27/14, patient reports that she has relief with acupuncture. There is lack of evidence that prior acupuncture care was of any functional benefit. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 2 sessions per week for 4 weeks of acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.