

Case Number:	CM14-0041108		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2014	Date of Injury:	04/18/2010
Decision Date:	08/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/20/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/07/2014

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 Emergency Medicine, 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 patient is a 45-year-old female who was injured on April 18, 2010. The patient continued to experience pain in her neck, left arm, low back, and left leg. Physical examination was notable for diffuse moderate tenderness to the cervical and lumbar paraspinal muscles, positive bilateral straight leg raises, intact sensation to light touch to all extremities, and normal motor strength in all major muscle groups. Diagnoses included chronic pain syndrome, thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis/radiculitis, sacroiliitis, and migraine headache. Treatment included physical therapy, cervical epidural steroid injections, medications, and surgery. Request for authorization for cervical epidural steroid injections was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection C5-6 and C6-7: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 46. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation AMA Guides (Radiculopathy).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 46.

Decision rationale: Epidural steroid injections are recommended as an option for treatment of radicular pain (defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy). Radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. Epidural steroid injection can offer short term pain relief and use should be in conjunction with other rehab efforts, including continuing a home exercise program. There is little information on improved function. The American Academy of Neurology recently concluded that epidural steroid injections may lead to an improvement in radicular lumbosacral pain between 2 and 6 weeks following the injection, but they do not affect impairment of function or the need for surgery and do not provide long-term pain relief beyond 3 months, and there is insufficient evidence to make any recommendation for the use of epidural steroid injections to treat radicular cervical pain. In this case documentation does not support the presence of radiculopathy. There are no motor or sensory deficits. The request is not medically necessary.