

Case Number:	CM14-0050149		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2014	Date of Injury:	09/08/2009
Decision Date:	08/25/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/13/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/17/2014

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 Occupational Medicine 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 54-year-old male with a 9/8/09 date of injury. At the time (3/13/14) of request for authorization for set of electrodes for a transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator unit (TENS). There is documentation of subjective (low back pain, constant, dull, with intermittent radicular symptoms to the lower extremities; difficulty with prolonged standing and sitting) and objective (slight loss of lumbar lordosis, tenderness to the paraspinal muscles, 2+ muscle spasms, palpable trigger points with a positive twitch response, decreased range of motion, positive straight leg raise, decreased sensation over the L4 and L5 dermatomes) findings, current diagnoses (musculoligamentous sprain/strain, bilateral radiculitis), and treatment to date (medications and TENS unit). The 3/6/14 medical report identifies that the TENS unit is providing pain relief and improved functionality. There is no documentation of how often the unit was used and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Set of electrodes for a transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator unit (TENS): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), page(s) 113-117 Page(s): 113-117.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of pain of at least three months duration, evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed, a statement identifying that the TENS unit will be used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and a treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a month trial of a TENS unit. In addition, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of how often the unit was used, outcomes in terms of pain relief and function, and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of continued TENS unit. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of musculoligamentous sprain/strain, bilateral radiculitis. In addition, there is documentation of patient utilizing a TENS unit and that the TENS unit is providing pain relief and improved functionality. However, there is no documentation of how often the unit was used and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for set of electrodes for a transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator unit (TENS) is not medically necessary.