

Case Number:	CM14-0057655		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2014	Date of Injury:	03/13/2012
Decision Date:	08/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/28/2014

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 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 39-year-old female with a 3/13/12 date of injury. At the time (4/15/14) of request for authorization for Bilateral Epidural Injection at C5 and C6, there is documentation of subjective (continued dull aching pain into cervical spine that radiates to right neck and shoulder area and numbness to both hands) and objective (tenderness to palpation over cervical paraspinals, limited range of motion of the cervical spine, limited by pain, Spurling test positive on right, diminished sensation in C5-C6 pattern, right, and deep tendon reflexes of biceps, triceps, and brachioradialis 2+) findings, current diagnoses (cervical spine strain and right C5 and C6 radiculopathy of the cervical spine) and treatment to date (acupuncture, chiropractic therapy, and physical therapy, activity modifications, and medications (including aspirin and protonix)). There is no documentation of imaging findings at the requested level.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral Epidural Injection at C5 and C6: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 175. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck & Upper Back Chapter, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs).

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies cervical epidural corticosteroid injections should be reserved for patients who otherwise would undergo open surgical procedures for nerve root compromise. ODG identifies documentation of subjective (pain, numbness, or tingling in a correlating nerve root distribution) and objective (sensory changes, motor changes, or reflex changes (if reflex relevant to the associated level) in a correlating nerve root distribution) radicular findings in each of the requested nerve root distributions, imaging (MRI, CT, myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at each of the requested levels, and failure of conservative treatment (activity modification, medications, and physical modalities), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of cervical epidural injection. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of cervical spine strain and right C5 and C6 radiculopathy of the cervical spine. In addition, there is documentation of subjective (numbness) and objective (sensory changes) radicular findings in the requested nerve root distribution, and failure of conservative treatment (activity modification, medications, and physical modalities). However, there is no documentation of imaging (MRI, CT, myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at the requested level. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Bilateral Epidural Injection at C5 and C6 is not medically necessary.