

Case Number:	CM14-0062042		
Date Assigned:	07/11/2014	Date of Injury:	01/04/2001
Decision Date:	08/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/05/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in Georgia. 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 claimant is an 80 year old male presenting with low back pain following a work related injury on 1/4/2001. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the lumbar spine on 3/11/2014 showed severe multilevel degenerative disc disease with osteophytic ridging and facet change and L4-5 spinal stenosis with severe bilateral foraminal narrowing. On 3/26/2014, the claimant complained of low back pain with occasional radiation to the legs. The physical exam was significant for painful loading of the lumbar facets bilaterally, decreased range of motion and spasms. The claimant's medications include Ketamine cream and Lidoderm patch as well as soma, hydrocodone, lorazepam, nabumetone and trazodone. The claimant also tried physical therapy and epidural steroid injection without benefit. The provider recommended facet injections for severe spondylitic changes, facet changes as well as severe neural foraminal stenosis and central stenosis at multiple levels.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral Lumbar FJ injections @ L4, L5 and S1 Under Fluoroscopic Guidance: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 187, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low back Complaints, Treatment Considerations.

Decision rationale: Bilateral Lumbar FJ injections @ L4, L5 and S1 Under Fluoroscopic Guidance is not medically necessary. The Occupation medicine practice guidelines criteria for use of diagnostic facet blocks require: that the clinical presentation be consistent with facet pain; Treatment is also limited to patients with low back pain that is nonradicular and had no more than 2 levels bilaterally; documentation of failed conservative therapy including home exercise physical therapy and NSAID is required at least 4-6 weeks prior to the diagnostic facet block; no more than 2 facet joint levels are injected at one session; recommended by them of no more than 0.5 cc of injectate was given to each joint; no pain medication from home should be taken for at least 4 hours prior to the diagnostic block and for 4-6 hours afterward; opioid should not be given as a sedative during the procedure; the use of IV sedation (including other agents such as modafinil) may interfere with the result of the diagnostic block, and should only be given in cases of extreme anxiety; the patient should document pain relief with the management such as VAS scale, emphasizing the importance of recording the maximum pain relief and maximum duration of pain. The patient should also keep medication use and activity level to support subjective reports of better pain control; diagnostic blocks should not be performed in patients in whom a surgical procedures anticipated; diagnostic facet block should not be performed in patients who have had a previous fusion procedure at the plan injection level. There is no documentation of failed conservative therapy and the MRI does not corroborate facet mediated pain; specifically, there is no specific time documented in the medical records that the claimant has failed at least 4-6 weeks of conservative therapy and the MRI shows evidence of spinal stenosis not face hypertrophy or facet effusion; therefore the requested procedure is not medically necessary.