

Case Number:	CM14-0077907		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	04/29/2013
Decision Date:	08/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/27/2014

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 Podiatric Surgery 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:

According to the enclosed information, this patient's left foot was injured while at work on 4/29/2013. Patient was shoveling asphalt and was struck on the left foot. He sustained a fracture to his left fifth toe. Diagnoses include painful fifth toe left foot, lesion of plantar nerve left foot. 8/12/2013 patient presented to his physician with complaints of pain to the third interspace left foot with sharp shooting pain extending to the third and fourth digits left side. A diagnosis of a traumatically induced neuroma third interspace was diagnosed. Patient was casted for her orthotics to help alleviate his painful neuroma and received a local steroid injections to the symptomatic neuroma. On 1/9/2014 patient again presents complaining of continued pain to the third interspace left foot with burning sensation to the third and fourth digits left side.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Series of seven (7) Alcohol Sclerosing Injections: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Non-MTUS The National Center for Biotechnology Information: Alcohol sclerosing therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 371,375.

Decision rationale: After careful review of the enclosed information and the pertinent MTUS guidelines for this case, it is my feeling that the decision for a series of seven alcohol sclerosing injections is not medically reasonable or necessary at this time. Chapter 14 is very clear treatment for Morton's neuroma, which is this patient's diagnoses left foot. Invasive techniques (e.g., needle acupuncture and injection procedures) have no proven value, with the exception of corticosteroid injection into the affected web space in patients with Morton's neuroma or into the affected area in patients with plantar fasciitis or heel spur if four to six weeks of conservative therapy is ineffective. The proposed treatment for this patient is with alcohol sclerosing agent, not corticosteroid. The MTUS guidelines go on to state that, if a patient with a neuroma has persistent pain in a web space despite using toe separators, along with temporary relief from local cortisone injections, surgical removal of the neuroma may be indicated. Besides the usual counseling about possible wound complications and complications of anesthesia, the patient can be informed that the operation is not always effective because the surgeon may be unable to find the neuroma and excise it. Always counsel the patient about expectations for surgery so that he or she can make an informed decision about whether or not to proceed with surgery. Alcohol sclerosing agent injections for Morton's neuroma is not recommended for patients. It's efficacy is also questionable according to current research.