

Case Number:	CM14-0080194		
Date Assigned:	07/23/2014	Date of Injury:	10/18/2011
Decision Date:	09/09/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/06/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/30/2014

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 Chiropractic and Acupuncture 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:

The injured worker is a 53 year old female who reported right shoulder and right knee pain from injury sustained on 10/18/11. Mechanism of injury was not documented in the provided medical records. There were no diagnostic imaging reports. Patient is diagnosed with right shoulder tendinitis and right knee meniscal tear and sprain/strain. Patient has been treated with medication, therapy and extensive acupuncture. Per medication notes dated 04/16/14, patient complains of right shoulder pain rated at 6/10 and right knee pain rated 4/10. Pain increases with activity and therapy helps. Examination revealed tenderness to palpation of the rotator cuff muscles. Per acupuncture progress notes dated 05/10/14, patient is improving slower than expected and she is able to carry and lift more weight. Per medical notes dated 05/16/14, patient complains of shoulder rated at 6/10 and knee pain rated at 4/10. Provider is requesting additional 8 acupuncture treatments. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Patient hasn't had any long term symptomatic or functional relief with acupuncture care. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2xwk x 4wks Right shoulder and Right Knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 9 Shoulder Complaints, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS- Section 9792.24.1 Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines page 8-9. "Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". Patient has had extensive acupuncture treatments. There is lack of evidence that prior acupuncture care was of any functional benefit. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 2x4 acupuncture treatments for right shoulder and right knee are not medically necessary.