

Case Number:	CM14-0085106		
Date Assigned:	07/30/2014	Date of Injury:	05/02/2008
Decision Date:	09/25/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/13/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/06/2014

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 Licensed in Psychology 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 claimant is a 42-year-old with a date of injury of May 2, 2008. The claimant sustained injury to her back, neck, upper extremities, and bilateral hands while working for S [REDACTED]. The mechanism of injury was not found within the submitted records. In his "Primary Treating Physician's Progress Report" dated April 17, 2014, Dr. [REDACTED] diagnosed the claimant with: (1) History of bilateral carpal tunnel release with persistent carpal tunnel symptoms; (2) Chronic neck, left greater than right upper extremity pain; and (3) Left shoulder pain. It is also reported that the claimant has developed psychiatric symptoms secondary to her work-related orthopedic injuries. In his PR-2 report dated April 4, 2014, Dr. [REDACTED] diagnosed the claimant with: (1) Major depressive disorder, single episode, mild; (2) Anxiety disorder, NOS; and (3) Pain disorder associated with both psychological factors and a general medical condition. The claimant has been receiving psychotherapy services with Dr. [REDACTED].

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Six sessions of psychotherapy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Behavioral interventions Page(s): 23.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and

Stress Chapter Cognitive therapy for depression Recommended. Cognitive behavior therapy for depression is recommended based on meta-analyses that compare its use with pharmaceuticals. Cognitive behavior therapy fared as well as antidepressant medication with severely depressed outpatients in four major comparisons. Effects may be longer lasting (80% relapse rate with antidepressants versus 25% with psychotherapy). (Paykel, 2006) (Bockting, 2006) (DeRubeis, 1999) (Goldapple, 2004) It also fared well in a meta-analysis comparing 78 clinical trials from 1977 -1996. (Gloaguen, 1998) In another study, it was found that combined therapy (antidepressant plus psychotherapy) was found to be more effective than psychotherapy alone. (Thase, 1997) A recent high quality study concluded that a substantial number of adequately treated patients did not respond to antidepressant therapy. (Corey-Lisle, 2004) A recent meta-analysis concluded that psychological treatment combined with antidepressant therapy is associated with a higher improvement rate than drug treatment alone. In longer therapies, the addition of psychotherapy helps to keep patients in treatment. (Pampallona, 2004) For panic disorder, cognitive behavior therapy is more effective and more cost-effective than medication. (Royal Australian, 2003) The gold standard for the evidence-based treatment of MDD is a combination of medication (antidepressants) and psychotherapy. The primary forms of psychotherapy that have been most studied through research are: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy. (Warren, 2005) Delivering cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) by telephone is as effective as delivering it face-to-face in the short term, and telephone therapy is safe and has a higher patient retention rate. The attrition rate from psychotherapy can exceed 50% due to time constraints, lack of available and accessible services, transportation problems, and cost. Significantly fewer participants receiving telephone CBT discontinued their therapy than did those receiving face-to-face CBT. Both treatment groups showed significant improvement in depression, and there were no significant treatment differences when measured at posttreatment between telephone and face-to-face CBT. However, face-to-face CBT was significantly superior to telephone CBT during the follow-up period. The RCT used 18 sessions of either telephone CBT or face-to-face CBT. (Mohr, 2012) Psychotherapy visits are generally separate from physical therapy visits. ODG Psychotherapy Guidelines: Initial trial of 6 visits over 6 weeks With evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 13-20 visits over 13-20 weeks (individual sessions).

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address the treatment of depression therefore, the Official Disability Guideline regarding the cognitive treatment of depression will be used as reference for this case. Based on the review of the medical records, the claimant has continued to experience chronic pain since her injury in 2008. She has also been experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety secondary to her orthopedic complaints and has been treating with psychologist, Dr. [REDACTED]. The exact number of completed sessions to date is unknown. There were seven PR-2 reports from November 15, 2013 through April 4, 2014 submitted for review, however, it is evident that there were sessions prior to November 15, 2013. According to the Utilization Review letter dated May 13, 2014, the claimant has completed "approx. 20-21 psychotherapy sessions." The records submitted cannot confirm this approximation. Without information about the number of completed sessions, it is difficult to determine the need for additional sessions according to the ODG. In his most recent PR-2 report dated April 4, 2014, Dr. [REDACTED] reports that the claimant had "improvement with the first sessions of individual cognitive behavioral psychotherapy" and requested an additional 6 sessions. Although the claimant may have demonstrated some improvement, the lack of information about the prior

services makes the need for additional services difficult to determine. As a result, the request for six sessions of psychotherapy is not medically necessary or appropriate.