

Case Number:	CM14-0093597		
Date Assigned:	07/25/2014	Date of Injury:	08/10/2013
Decision Date:	08/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/20/2014

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 & 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:

Claimant is 36 year old female who sustained a work related injury on 8/10/2013. Her diagnoses are depressive disorder, knee pain, lumbar myofascial pain, left knee patellofemoral syndrome and patella subluxation, and right knee patella femoral syndrome. Per an AME dated 6/4/2014, she is permanent and stationary and should be able to work with restrictions. Prior therapy has includes physical therapy, low level laser therapy, cortisone injection, topical medication, acupuncture, oral medication, and work restrictions. Per a PR-2 dated 6/24/2014, the claimant has persistent pain in the left knee joint and is not working. Claimant has had at least 12 session of acupuncture with six sessions prior to 2/28/2014, and six more sessions on 3/26, 3/28, 4/2, 4/9, 4/11, 4/17. Per a PR-2 dated 2/7/2014, the claimant has had a couple of acupuncture sessions that has helped the pain but she still has persistent pain. Per a PR-2 dated 2/28/201, the claimant had a noticeable improvement of pain and level of functioning of the left knee with six session of acupuncture. She reports that she is able to perform activities of daily living much better. The provider requests for claimant to see an orthopedic surgeon and injects the claimant with a corticosteroid in the same visit. Per a PR-2 dated 4/4/14, the claimant twisted her knee a few days ago and reports being depressed and developing low back pain. The provider requests another cortisone injection and increased her pain medication. Per a PR-2 dated 4/29/14, the claimant reports almost complete relief of knee pain after a few sessions of low level laser therapy. She has completely stopped her pain medication and reports being able to perform activities of daily living much better. Per a PR-2 dated 5/27/2014, the claimant reports persistent knee pain and is waiting for a surgical consult. The provider states that acupuncture has been extremely helpful and almost completely relieved her pain but it was unfortunately not successful long term.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture to left knee x 8 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to evidenced based guidelines, further acupuncture visits after an initial trial are medically necessary based on documented functional improvement. Functional improvement means a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions, medication, or dependency on continued medical treatment. The claimant has had twelve sessions of acupuncture with reported pain relief. However the provider failed to document functional improvement associated with the completion of her acupuncture visits. The claimant has not been able to return the work and continues to have persistent pain. The provider reports that acupuncture is helping but then requests surgical consults, cortisone injections, increases medications, and laser therapy along with stating acupuncture benefits. In regards to previous acupuncture rendered, there were no significant, measurable outcomes, increased ability to perform activities of daily living, increased ability to perform job-related activities, or reduced medication. Therefore, the request for acupuncture to left knee x 8 sessions is not medically necessary and appropriate.