

Case Number:	CM14-0113186		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	07/23/2012
Decision Date:	04/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/08/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/16/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 male, who sustained an industrial injury on 7/23/2012. Currently he reported right-sided low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed with, and/or impressions were noted to include, lumbar stenosis with disc protrusions and annular tear; and internal derangement of both knees. Treatments to date have included consultations, diagnostic magnetic resonance imaging study of the lumbar spine (8/24/12); successful lumbar inter-laminar steroid injection therapy (3/6/14); and medication management. Current progress notes an industrial complaint history that includes ongoing low back complaints for which a repeat magnetic resonance imaging study of the lumbar spine was recommended, in June 2014, for possible lumbar decompression. Also noted was that he was re-started on temporary total disability, versus returned to sedentary work only.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Low Back, Indications for Imaging.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints
Page(s): Chapter 12- Low Back Complaints, Imaging, pages 303-304.

Decision rationale: Per ACOEM Treatment Guidelines for the Lower Back Disorders, Criteria for ordering imaging studies include Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure, none identified here. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination and electrodiagnostic studies. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist; however, review of submitted medical reports for this chronic injury have not adequately demonstrated the indication for repeating the MRI of the Lumbar spine nor document any specific changed clinical findings of neurological deficits, progressive deterioration, or acute red-flag findings to support repeating this imaging study. The patient exhibits continued chronic low back pain with unchanged clinical findings. When the neurologic examination is less clear, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. The Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Lumbar Spine is not medically necessary and appropriate.