

Case Number:	CM14-0131302		
Date Assigned:	08/20/2014	Date of Injury:	03/28/2014
Decision Date:	01/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/12/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/17/2014

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 Orthopedic Surgery 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 45-year-old female with a 3/28/14 date of injury. At the time (8/12/14) of the Decision for right carpal tunnel release, there is documentation of subjective (bilateral hand pain with numbness and tingling) and objective (positive carpal compression test, positive phalen's sign, and positive Tinel's sign) findings, imaging findings (electrodiagnostic studies upper extremities (7/1/14) report revealed mild bilateral carpal tunnel), current diagnoses (right carpal tunnel syndrome and numbness bilateral wrist), and treatment to date (physical therapy, activity modification, brace, and medications). Medical reports identify that patient awakens at night due to wrist numbness and tingling. There is no documentation of additional subjective symptoms (Abnormal Katz hand diagram scores and/or Flick sign (shaking hand)).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right Carpal Tunnel Release: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM carpal tunnel section

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 270. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Carpal tunnel release surgery (CTR)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentation of positive findings on clinical examination and the diagnosis should be supported by nerve conduction, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of carpal tunnel release. ODG identifies documentation of at least 2 symptoms (Abnormal Katz hand diagram scores, nocturnal symptoms, and/or Flick sign (shaking hand)), at least 2 findings by physical exam (Durkan's compression test, Semmes-Weinstein monofilament test, Phalen Sign, Tinel's sign, decreased 2-point discrimination, and/or mild thenar weakness (thumb abduction), no current pregnancy, at least 3 conservative treatment measures attempted (activity modification \geq 1 month, wrist splint \geq 1 month, nonprescription analgesia, physical therapy referral for home exercise training, and/or successful initial outcome from corticosteroid injection trial (optional)), and positive electrodiagnostic testing, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of carpal tunnel release. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of right carpal tunnel syndrome and numbness bilateral wrist. In addition, there is documentation of a symptom (nocturnal symptoms); at least 2 findings by physical exam (Durkan's compression test, Phalen Sign, and Tinel's sign); at least 3 conservative treatment (physical therapy, medications, and activity modification); and positive electrodiagnostic testing. However, despite documentation of subjective (bilateral hand pain with numbness and tingling) findings, there is no (clear) documentation of additional subjective symptoms (Abnormal Katz hand diagram scores and/or Flick sign (shaking hand)). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for right carpal tunnel release is not medically necessary.