

Case Number:	CM14-0188100		
Date Assigned:	12/05/2014	Date of Injury:	06/12/2003
Decision Date:	02/19/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/12/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/12/2014

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular Medicine

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 patient is a 69-year-old man who sustained a work-related injury on June 12, 2003. Subsequently, the patient developed a chronic back and neck pain. According to a progress report dated on October 8, 2014, the patient was complaining of back pain. The patient was reported to have improvement to always neck pain and arm pain after cervical epidural steroid injection. The patient physical examination demonstrated worsening of lumbar tenderness with reduced range of motion. The provider requested authorization for lumbar epidural steroid injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

lumbar epidural steroid injection at L5-S1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections (ESIs).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 309.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, epidural steroid injection is optional for radicular pain to avoid surgery. It may offer short term benefit, however there is no significant long term benefit or reduction for the need of surgery. Furthermore, the patient file does not document that the patient is candidate for surgery. In addition, there is no evidence that the patient has been unresponsive to conservative treatments. Furthermore, there is no recent clinical and objective documentation of radiculopathy including recent EMG and MRI findings. MTUS guidelines do not recommend epidural injections for back pain without radiculopathy. Therefore, lumbar epidural steroid injection at L5-S1 is not medically necessary.