

Case Number:	CM14-0190679		
Date Assigned:	11/24/2014	Date of Injury:	04/27/1996
Decision Date:	01/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/14/2014

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 Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 patient is a 59- year-old female who was injured on April 27, 1995. The patient continued to experience pain in her bilateral upper extremities. Physical examination was notable for tenderness to the cervical paraspinal muscles, intact sensation to the upper extremities, and decreased motor strength to bilateral hand grip and right arm flexion. Diagnoses included cervicobrachial syndrome. Treatment included medications, TENS unit, aquatherapy, and physical therapy. Requests for authorization for Nex Wave with supplies and aqua therapy #12 session for the neck and upper extremities were submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aqua Therapy 12 sessions for the neck and upper extremities: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aqua therapy Page(s): 22.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 56.

Decision rationale: Aquatherapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced

weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. Water exercise improved some components of health-related quality of life, balance, and stair climbing in females with fibromyalgia, but regular exercise and higher intensities may be required to preserve most of these gains. The recommended number of visits follows those recommended for land-based physical therapy. Patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the therapy). In this case documentation does not support that the patient requires therapy with reduced weight bearing. In addition the requested number of twelve visits surpasses the recommended number of six for clinical trial. The request should not be authorized.