

Case Number:	CM14-0190942		
Date Assigned:	11/24/2014	Date of Injury:	03/25/2013
Decision Date:	01/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/17/2014

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 Family Medicine 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:

The patient is a 25 year-old woman who was injured at work on 3/25/2013. The injury was primarily to her back and right hip. She is requesting review of denial for Durable Medical Equipment 90 Day Trial of TENS Unit and Supplies and Electrode and Batteries/One Month. Medical records corroborate ongoing care for her injuries. Her chronic diagnoses include: Lumbar Disc Disease and Disc Protrusion. Treatment has included the following: Epidural Steroid Injections X 3; Physical Therapy; and medications to include: Opioids, topical analgesics and NSAIDs. A request for authorization was issued for a three month trial of a TENS unit with supplies. In the Utilization Review process, report completed 11/14/2014, the medical necessity for a TENS unit with supplies was modified for a 30 day trial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Durable Medical Equipment 30 Day Trial of Tens Unit and Supplies: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS/Chronic Pain/Transcutaneous Electrical Stimulation Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: The MTUS/Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines comment on the use of a TENS unit/supplies for the treatment of chronic pain. These guidelines state the following: TENS is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below. While TENS may reflect the long-standing accepted standard of care within many medical communities, the results of studies are inconclusive; the published trials do not provide information on the stimulation parameters which are most likely to provide optimum pain relief, nor do they answer questions about long-term effectiveness. (Carroll-Cochrane, 2001) Several published evidence-based assessments of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) have found that evidence is lacking concerning effectiveness. One problem with current studies is that many only evaluated single-dose treatment, which may not reflect the use of this modality in a clinical setting. Other problems include statistical methodology, small sample size, influence of placebo effect, and difficulty comparing the different outcomes that were measured. Recommendations by types of pain: A home-based treatment trial of one month may be appropriate for neuropathic pain and CRPS II (conditions that have limited published evidence for the use of TENS as noted below), and for CRPS I (with basically no literature to support use). Criteria for the use of TENS: Chronic intractable pain (for the conditions noted above): - Documentation of pain of at least three months duration.- There is evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed.- A one-month trial period of the TENS unit should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) with documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function; rental would be preferred over purchase during this trial.- Other ongoing pain treatment should also be documented during the trial period including medication usage.- A treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit should be submitted.- A 2-lead unit is generally recommended; if a 4-lead unit is recommended, there must be documentation of why this is necessary. In this case the medical records justify the use of a TENS Unit with required supplies. However, the duration of the trial in the request (90 days) exceeds the MTUS guideline recommendations. The Utilization Review modification for a 30-day trial is consistent with the guidelines. Therefore, the request for a TENS Unit and supplies X 90 days is not considered as medically necessary.

Durable Medical Equipment Electrode and Batteries One Month: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS/Chronic Pain/Electrical Stimulation Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: The MTUS/Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines comment on the use of a TENS unit/supplies for the treatment of chronic pain. These guidelines state the following: TENS is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below. While TENS may reflect the long-standing accepted standard of care within many medical

communities, the results of studies are inconclusive; the published trials do not provide information on the stimulation parameters which are most likely to provide optimum pain relief, nor do they answer questions about long-term effectiveness. (Carroll-Cochrane, 2001) Several published evidence-based assessments of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) have found that evidence is lacking concerning effectiveness. One problem with current studies is that many only evaluated single-dose treatment, which may not reflect the use of this modality in a clinical setting. Other problems include statistical methodology, small sample size, influence of placebo effect, and difficulty comparing the different outcomes that were measured.

Recommendations by types of pain: A home-based treatment trial of one month may be appropriate for neuropathic pain and CRPS II (conditions that have limited published evidence for the use of TENS as noted below), and for CRPS I (with basically no literature to support use).

Criteria for the use of TENS: Chronic intractable pain (for the conditions noted above):

- Documentation of pain of at least three months duration.
- There is evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed.
- A one-month trial period of the TENS unit should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) with documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function; rental would be preferred over purchase during this trial.
- Other ongoing pain treatment should also be documented during the trial period including medication usage.
- A treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit should be submitted.
- A 2-lead unit is generally recommended; if a 4-lead unit is recommended, there must be documentation of why this is necessary.

In this case the medical records justify the use of a TENS Unit with required supplies. However, the duration of the trial in the request (90 days) exceeds the MTUS guideline recommendations. The Utilization Review modification for a 30-day trial is consistent with the guidelines. Therefore, the request for a TENS Unit and supplies (to include batteries and electrodes) X 90 days is not considered as medically necessary.