

Case Number:	CM14-0193896		
Date Assigned:	12/01/2014	Date of Injury:	08/26/2011
Decision Date:	01/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/06/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/19/2014

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 Preventive Medicine, has a subspecialty in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in Iowa. 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:

This is a 35 year old patient with date of injury of 08/26/2011. Medical records indicate the patient is undergoing treatment for cervical sprain/strain, cervical radiculopathy and strain/sprain of the right shoulder. Subjective complaints include neck and back "locking up", significant discomfort most of the time, pain rated 8/10. Objective findings include normal gait and tenderness to palpation mid cervical spine. Treatment has consisted of acupuncture, post-operative physical therapy for the right shoulder arthroscopy, post-operative physical therapy for the cervical neck fusion, TENS unit, home exercise program, acupuncture, Norco, Omeprazole, previous labral reconstruction, C5-6 cervical anterior interbody fusion and right shoulder arthroscopy. The utilization review determination was rendered on 11/06/2014 recommending non-certification of MRI of the cervical spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Neck & Upper Back (updated 08/04/14)

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177, 182. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck and Upper Back, Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

Decision rationale: ACOEM states "Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: Emergence of a red flag, physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery and clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure". ODG states, "Not recommended except for indications list below. Patients who are alert, have never lost consciousness, are not under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, have no distracting injuries, have no cervical tenderness, and have no neurologic findings, do not need imaging. Indications for imaging - MRI (magnetic resonance imaging):- Chronic neck pain (= after 3 months conservative treatment), radiographs normal, neurologic signs or symptoms present- Neck pain with radiculopathy if severe or progressive neurologic deficit- Chronic neck pain, radiographs show spondylosis, neurologic signs or symptoms present- Chronic neck pain, radiographs show old trauma, neurologic signs or symptoms present- Chronic neck pain, radiographs show bone or disc margin destruction- Suspected cervical spine trauma, neck pain, clinical findings suggest ligamentous injury (sprain), radiographs and/or CT "normal"- Known cervical spine trauma: equivocal or positive plain films with neurological deficit- Upper back/thoracic spine trauma with neurological deficit. The treating physician has not provided evidence of red flags to meet the criteria above. As such the request for MRI of the cervical spine is not medically necessary.