

Case Number:	CM14-0194682		
Date Assigned:	12/02/2014	Date of Injury:	12/05/2005
Decision Date:	01/16/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/20/2014

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 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine 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 38 year old male with injury date on 12/5/05. The patient complains of continued right knee pain with mild, dull aching relieved substantially by one previous Synvisc injection per 8/12/14 report. The patient is able to do his normal activities of daily living and can do sports and run without any significant pain per 8/12/14 report. The patient over the last 3-4 weeks has noticed a return of mild swelling since his last injection on 5/21/14 per 8/12/14 report. The patient had another Synvisc injection on December 2013 and pain relief lasted about 4 months, and then knee pain returned per 5/21/14 report. On the 8/12/14 progress reported provided by the treating physician, the diagnosis is traumatic osteoarthritis of the right knee relieved by Synvisc 1. A physical exam on 8/12/14 showed "minimally stiff right knee, -5 to 110 degrees, range of motion reduced." The patient's treatment history includes medications (ibuprofen), and Synvisc injections. The treating physician is requesting one Synvisc injection. The utilization review determination being challenged is dated 1/7/14. The requesting physician provided treatment reports from 11/13/13 to 8/12/14.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One Synvisc injection: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee Chapter on hyaluronic acid injections:

Decision rationale: This patient presents with right knee pain. The treater has asked for one Synvisc injection on 8/12/14. Standing knee X-rays done on 11/25/13 report showed 3mm in 2.5mm medial/lateral joint space interval. No new xrays have been done on left knee per 8/12/14 report. Review of the reports do not show any evidence of knee MRIs being done in the past. Regarding hyaluronic acid injections, ODG recommends as a possible option for severe osteoarthritis for patients who have not responded adequately to recommended conservative treatments (exercise, NSAIDs or acetaminophen), to potentially delay total knee replacement. Repeat injections are recommended if there is symptomatic improvement lasting 6 months or more. In this case, the patient has chronic knee pain. 2 prior synvisc injections were of benefit, the first one providing 4 months of pain relief, and the second one providing relief for 2 months until swelling returned. Although recovering from traumatic osteoarthritis of the knee, the patient, however, has full range of motion of the knee, and is able to do sports and run without significant pain. Synvisc injections are only indicated for severe osteoarthritis, which this patient does not appear to have. Furthermore, ODG guidelines do not support repeat injections unless symptom improvement lasts at least 6 months. In this patient, pain reduction lasted only 2-4 months. The requested one Synvisc injection is not medically necessary.