

Case Number:	CM14-0194809		
Date Assigned:	12/02/2014	Date of Injury:	09/02/2014
Decision Date:	01/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/21/2014
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 Occupational 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 40-year-old male with a 9/2/14 date of injury. At the time (10/21/14) of request for authorization for MRI to the cervical spine, there is documentation of subjective (neck pain rated 8/10 and bilateral shoulder pain rated 8/10) and objective (cervical spine myospasm and pain at C4 to T5, positive cervical distraction test, shoulder depression test, supraspinatus test and coracoid push-button sign, muscle strength and reflexes within normal limits) findings, imaging findings (cervical spine x-rays (9/12/14) revealed decreased cervical lordosis), current diagnoses (cervical sprain/strain), and treatment to date (chiropractic and activity modification). There is no documentation of red flag diagnoses, physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; or diagnosis of nerve root compromise, based on clear history and physical examination findings, in preparation for invasive procedure.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI to the cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 165, 177-178.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 179-183.

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM Guidelines identifies documentation of red flag diagnoses where plain film radiographs are negative, physiologic evidence (in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination, electrodiagnostic studies, laboratory tests, or bone scans) of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, failure of conservative treatment; or diagnosis of nerve root compromise, based on clear history and physical examination findings, in preparation for invasive procedure; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of an MRI. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of a diagnosis of cervical sprain/strain. In addition, there is documentation of negative plain film radiographs and failure of conservative treatment. However, there is no documentation of red flag diagnoses, physiologic evidence (in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination, electrodiagnostic studies, laboratory tests, or bone scans) of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; or diagnosis of nerve root compromise, based on clear history and physical examination findings, in preparation for invasive procedure. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for MRI to the cervical spine is not medically necessary.