

Case Number:	CM14-0197024		
Date Assigned:	12/05/2014	Date of Injury:	12/17/2012
Decision Date:	01/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/24/2014

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 46-year-old male who was injured on December 17, 2012. The patient continued to experience pain in his bilateral wrist and hands. Physical examination was notable for positive Phalen's sign, and tenderness to the volar surfaces of both wrists. Diagnoses included carpal tunnel syndrome and mood disorder. Treatment included medications, electrical stimulator, and shockwave therapy. Requests for authorization for acupuncture twice weekly for six weeks to lumbar and cervical spine and chiropractic therapy twice weekly for six weeks to lumbar and thoracic spine were submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2 times a week for 6 weeks to Lumbar and Cervical Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Section 9792.24.1 of the California Code of regulations states that Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced or not tolerated or as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation. It is the insertion and removal of filiform needles to stimulate acupoints (acupuncture points). Needles may be inserted, manipulated, and retained for a period

of time. Acupuncture can be used to reduce pain, reduce inflammation, increase blood flow, increase range of motion, decrease the side effect of medication-induced nausea, promote relaxation in an anxious patient, and reduce muscle spasm. Acupuncture with electrical stimulation is the use of electrical current on the needles at the acupuncture site. It is used to increase effectiveness of the needles by continuous stimulation of the acupoint. Physiological effects (depending on location and settings) can include endorphin release for pain relief, reduction of inflammation, increased blood circulation, analgesia through interruption of pain stimulus, and muscle relaxation. It is indicated to treat chronic pain conditions, radiating pain along a nerve pathway, muscle spasm, inflammation, scar tissue pain, and pain located in multiple sites. Specific indications for treatment of pain include treatment of joint pain, joint stiffness, soft tissue pain and inflammation, paresthesias, post-surgical pain relief, muscle spasm and scar tissue pain. OGD states that acupuncture is not recommended for acute back pain, but is recommended as an option for chronic low back pain in conjunction with other active interventions. Acupuncture is recommended when use as an adjunct to active rehabilitation. Frequency and duration of acupuncture or acupuncture with electrical stimulation may be performed as follows: 1) Time to produce functional improvement: 3 to 6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1 to 3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1 to 2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented. In this case the request therapy is for the cervical and lumbar spine. Documentation available does not support the diagnosis of cervical or lumbar spinal disease. In addition the requested number of 12 visits surpasses the recommended 3 to 6 treatments to produce functional improvement. The request should not be authorized.

Chiropractic 2 times a week for 6 weeks to Lumbar and Cervical Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Manual therapy & manipulation.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 58.

Decision rationale: Manual therapy and evaluation are recommended for chronic pain if caused by musculoskeletal conditions. Manual Therapy is widely used in the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. The intended goal or effect of Manual Medicine is the achievement of positive symptomatic or objective measurable gains in functional improvement that facilitate progression in the patient's therapeutic exercise program and return to productive activities. Manipulation is manual therapy that moves a joint beyond the physiologic range-of-motion but not beyond the anatomic range-of-motion. Recommended treatment parameters are as follows: Time to produce effect - 4-6 treatments, frequency of 1-2 times per week with maximum duration of 8 weeks. In this case the request therapy is for the cervical and lumbar spine. Documentation available does not support the diagnosis of cervical or lumbar spinal disease. In addition the requested number of 12 visits surpasses the recommended 6 treatments for clinical trial to determine if treatment will be effective. The request should not be authorized.

