

Case Number:	CM14-0198461		
Date Assigned:	12/08/2014	Date of Injury:	01/16/2007
Decision Date:	01/21/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/25/2014

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 licensed in Acupuncture 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:

This is a 57 year old male patient with pain complains of his feet (bilateral). Diagnoses included plantar fasciitis, lumbar intervertebral disc displacement. Previous treatments included: oral medication, physical therapy, and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for an acupuncture trial x12 was made on 10-16-14 by the PTP. The requested care was modified on 11-19-14 by the UR reviewer to approve six sessions and non-certifying six sessions. The reviewer rationale was that acupuncture x12 exceeds the guidelines, "a trial of six sessions is supported by the MTUS as medically and necessary. Additional care may be considered with documentation of objective functional improvement".

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Twelve sessions of Acupuncture to bilateral feet (2x6): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The guidelines note that the amount of acupuncture to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6 treatments. The same guidelines read extension of acupuncture care could be supported for medical necessity "if functional improvement is documented as either a

clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions and a reduction in the dependency on continued medical treatment." In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care, an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS. As the PTP requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore not supported for medical necessity.