

Case Number:	CM14-0199193		
Date Assigned:	12/09/2014	Date of Injury:	10/07/1995
Decision Date:	01/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/26/2014

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 55-year-old female who was injured on October 7, 1995. The patient continued to experience pain in her lower back. Physical examination was notable for normal strength in the bilateral lower extremities, negative straight leg raise bilaterally, moderate tenderness to palpation of the bilateral paraspinal region, and moderated pain with lumbar extension. Diagnoses included lumbago, postlaminectomy syndrome, chronic pain syndrome, and spinal stenosis. Treatment included medications, spinal cord stimulator, and surgery. Request for authorization for reprogramming of Medtronic spinal cord stimulator was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Reprogramming of Medtronic SCS: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain, Spinal cord stimulators(SCS)

Decision rationale: Spinal cord stimulators are recommended only for selected patients in cases when less invasive procedures have failed or are contraindicated, after a successful temporary trial and for the following indications: - Failed back syndrome (persistent pain in patients who have undergone at least one previous back operation and are not candidates for repeat surgery), when all of the following are present: (1) symptoms are primarily lower extremity radicular pain; there has been limited response to non-interventional care (e.g. neuroleptic agents, analgesics, injections, physical therapy, etc.); (2) psychological clearance indicates realistic expectations and clearance for the procedure; (3) there is no current evidence of substance abuse issues; (4) there are no contraindications to a trial; (5) Permanent placement requires evidence of 50% pain relief and medication reduction or functional improvement after temporary trial. Estimates are in the range of 40-60% success rate 5 years after surgery. Neurostimulation is generally considered to be ineffective in treating nociceptive pain. The procedure should be employed with more caution in the cervical region than in the thoracic or lumbar due to potential complications and limited literature evidence. Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)/Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD), 70-90% success rate, at 14 to 41 months after surgery. (Note: This is a controversial diagnosis.) Post amputation pain (phantom limb pain), 68% success rate Post herpetic neuralgia, 90% success rate. Spinal cord injury dysesthesias (pain in lower extremities associated with spinal cord injury) Pain associated with multiple sclerosis. Peripheral vascular disease (insufficient blood flow to the lower extremity, causing pain and placing it at risk for amputation), 80% success at avoiding the need for amputation when the initial implant trial was successful. The data is also very strong for angina. As batteries for both rechargeable and non-rechargeable systems are nearing end of life, there are both early replacement indicators and end of service notifications. Typical life may be 8-9 years for rechargeable batteries, but this depends on the unit. In addition, the physician programmer can be used to interrogate the implanted device and determine the estimated remaining battery life. In this case the patient had the spinal cord stimulator implanted in 2009. Documentation in the medical record supports that the device is functioning properly and the patient is receiving relief. There is no indication for reprogramming. The request is not medically necessary and appropriate.