

Case Number:	CM14-0199230		
Date Assigned:	12/09/2014	Date of Injury:	09/21/2000
Decision Date:	01/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/08/2014
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 64-year-old female who was injured on September 21, 2000. The patient continued to experience pain in her neck and right shoulder. Physical examination was notable for diffuse spine tenderness and slow gait. Diagnoses included fibromyalgia, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, and right hand triggering. Treatment included physical therapy, interferential unit, surgery, and medications. Request for authorization for aqua therapy 12 sessions was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 aqua therapy sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 56.

Decision rationale: Aqua therapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. Water exercise improved some

components of health-related quality of life, balance, and stair climbing in females with fibromyalgia, but regular exercise and higher intensities may be required to preserve most of these gains. The recommended number of visits follows those recommended for land-based physical therapy. Per guidelines, patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the therapy). In this case, the aqua therapy was for the patient's fibromyalgia. The requested number of 12 visits surpasses the number of six recommended for clinical trial to determine functional improvement. The request is not medically necessary.