

Case Number:	CM14-0206210		
Date Assigned:	01/06/2015	Date of Injury:	10/28/1995
Decision Date:	02/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/09/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 61-year-old man who sustained a work-related injury on October 28, 1995. Subsequently, the patient developed chronic neck and low back pain. According to a progress report dated November 6, 2014, the patient continued to report neck and upper trapezius pain with occasional radiation into the left upper extremity, as well as mainly axial low back pain with occasional radiation into the bilateral lower extremities. The patient noted that the pain was gradually getting worse over time. He reported that he did not feel Norco was working anymore, that he getting used to it or it isn't working anymore, or both. He rated the level of pain as an 8-9/10. It was noted that the patient has a long history of pain with occasional flare ups, especially in the left trapezius. He has undergone both physical therapy and acupuncture in the past, has been treated with medication management, and has undergone surgery involving both the cervical and lumbar regions. On examination, he demonstrated tenderness through the muscles of the neck and upper back on the left with limited range of motion in both the cervical and lumbar spine. Sensory and motor examination was essentially intact and reflexes were noted to be normal except in the left tricep, which was diminished. Provocative testing was negative. On a visit dated January 6, 2015, the patient still had complaint of central low back pain, which occasionally radiates into both legs. Overall, he feels the same. The patient was diagnosed with chronic pain, cervical disc herniation, lumbar disc herniation, bronchiolitis obliterans, and recurrent laryngeal nerve paralysis. The provider requested authorization for functional restoration program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

20 Days of inpatient treatment in functional restoration program: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Programs (Functional Restoration Programs) Page(s): 31-33.

Decision rationale: Chronic pain programs (functional restoration programs) are recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes, for patients with conditions that put them at risk of delayed recovery. Patients should also be motivated to improve and return to work, and meet the patient selection criteria outlined below. Also called Multidisciplinary pain programs or Interdisciplinary rehabilitation programs, these pain rehabilitation programs combine multiple treatments, and at the least, include psychological care along with physical therapy & occupational therapy (including an active exercise component as opposed to passive modalities). While recommended, the research remains ongoing as to (1) what is considered the "gold-standard" content for treatment; (2) the group of patients that benefit most from this treatment; (3) the ideal timing of when to initiate treatment; (4) the intensity necessary for effective treatment; and (5) cost-effectiveness. It has been suggested that interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary care models for treatment of chronic pain may be the most effective way to treat this condition. These treatment modalities are based on the biopsychosocial model, one that views pain and disability in terms of the interaction between physiological, psychological and social factors. There appears to be little scientific evidence for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary biopsychosocial rehabilitation compared with other rehabilitation facilities for neck and shoulder pain, as opposed to low back pain and generalized pain syndromes. Types of programs: There is no one universal definition of what comprises Chronic pain programs (functional restoration programs) are recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes, for patients with conditions that put them at risk of delayed recovery. Patients should also be motivated to improve and return to work, and meet the patient selection criteria outlined below. Also called Multidisciplinary pain programs or Interdisciplinary rehabilitation programs, these pain rehabilitation programs combine multiple treatments, and at the least, include psychological care along with physical therapy & occupational therapy (including an active exercise component as opposed to passive modalities). While recommended, the research remains ongoing as to (1) what is considered the "gold-standard" content for treatment; (2) the group of patients that benefit most from this treatment; (3) the ideal timing of when to initiate treatment; (4) the intensity necessary for effective treatment; and (5) cost-effectiveness. It has been suggested that interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary care models for treatment of chronic pain may be the most effective way to treat this condition. These treatment modalities are based on the biopsychosocial model, one that views pain and disability in terms of the interaction between physiological, psychological and social factors. There appears to be little scientific evidence for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary biopsychosocial rehabilitation compared with other rehabilitation facilities for neck and shoulder pain, as opposed to low back pain and generalized pain syndromes. Types of programs: There is no one universal definition of what comprises interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary treatment. The most commonly referenced

programs have been defined in the following general ways: (1) Multidisciplinary programs: Involves one or two specialists directing the services of a number of team members, with these specialists often having independent goals. These programs can be further subdivided into four levels of pain programs: (a) Multidisciplinary pain centers (generally associated with academic centers and include research as part of their focus); (b) Multidisciplinary pain clinics; (c) Pain clinics; (d) Modality-oriented clinics. (2) Interdisciplinary pain programs: Involves a team approach that is outcome focused and coordinated and offers goal-oriented interdisciplinary services. Communication on a minimum of a weekly basis is emphasized. The most intensive of these programs is referred to as a Functional Restoration Program, with a major emphasis on maximizing function versus minimizing pain. See Functional restoration programs. Types of treatment: Components suggested for interdisciplinary care include the following services delivered in an integrated fashion: (a) physical treatment; (b) medical care and supervision; (c) psychological and behavioral care; (d) psychosocial care; (e) vocational rehabilitation and training; and (f) education. Predictors of success and failure: As noted, one of the criticisms of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs is the lack of an appropriate screening tool to help to determine who will most benefit from this treatment. Retrospective research has examined decreased rates of completion of functional restoration programs, and there is ongoing research to evaluate screening tools prior to entry. The following variables have been found to be negative predictors of efficacy of treatment with the programs as well as negative predictors of completion of the programs: (1) a negative relationship with the employer/supervisor; (2) poor work adjustment and satisfaction; (3) a negative outlook about future employment; (4) high levels of psychosocial distress (higher pretreatment levels of depression, pain and disability); (5) involvement in financial disability disputes; (6) greater rates of smoking; (7) duration of pre-referral disability time; (8) prevalence of opioid use; and (9) pretreatment levels of pain. Multidisciplinary treatment strategies are effective for patients with chronic low back pain (CLBP) in all stages of chronicity and should not only be given to those with lower grades of CLBP, according to the results of a prospective longitudinal clinical study reported in the December 15 issue of Spine. See also chronic pain programs, early intervention; chronic pain programs, intensity; chronic pain programs, opioids; and Functional restoration programs. Criteria for the general use of multidisciplinary pain management programs: Outpatient pain rehabilitation programs may be considered medically necessary when all of the following criteria are met: 1) An adequate and thorough evaluation has been made, including baseline functional testing so follow-up with the same test can note functional improvement; (2) Previous methods of treating chronic pain have been unsuccessful and there is an absence of other options likely to result in significant clinical improvement; (3) The patient has a significant loss of ability to function independently resulting from the chronic pain; (4) The patient is not a candidate where surgery or other treatments would clearly be warranted (if a goal of treatment is to prevent or avoid controversial or optional surgery, a trial of 10 visits may be implemented to assess whether surgery may be avoided); (5) The patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change; & (6) Negative predictors of success above have been addressed. In this case, there is no documentation that the patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change. Furthermore, there is no objective documentation that the patient has failed previous methods for treating pain or a significant loss of function. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.