

Case Number:	CM14-0209031		
Date Assigned:	12/22/2014	Date of Injury:	05/25/2001
Decision Date:	02/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/01/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/15/2014

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 Family Practice 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 35-year-old male claimant who sustained a work injury on May 25, 2001 involving the low back. He was diagnosed with lumbar radiculopathy and sacroiliac dysfunction. He had used a TENS unit and a heating pad. He had used analgesics as well as Lyrica. A progress note on June 16, 2014 indicated the claimant had a positive straight leg raise test on the left side reduced range of motion. There was slightly reduced sensation in the L5 region. A progress note on November 6, 2014 indicated claimant had persistent low back pain. An examination was not performed. A request was made for a medial branch block for his lumbar spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Medial branch nerve block at left L4, L5, S1; under sedation: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 309.

Decision rationale: According to the ACOEM guidelines, invasive techniques are of questionable merit. According to the ODG guidelines, a medial branch block is to be performed prior to a facet neurotomy. It is used for diagnostic information. In this case, there was no

indication for a future plan of a facet neurotomy. Therefore the request for a medial nerve branch block is not medically necessary.