

Case Number:	CM14-0213373		
Date Assigned:	12/30/2014	Date of Injury:	08/28/2003
Decision Date:	02/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/19/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 69-year-old male with a 8/28/03 date of injury. At the time (11/29/14) of request for authorization for Lumbar epidural steroid injection L5-S1, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain) and objective (tenderness over the lumbosacral region; limited range of motion; positive left straight leg raising test; dysesthesia and hypoaesthesia along the lateral right thigh, calf, and foot; and normal motor strength) findings, current diagnoses (degeneration of lumbar or lumbosacral intervertebral disc and displacement of lumbar intervertebral disc without myelopathy), and treatment to date (medications and previous epidural injections). Medical report identifies that previous epidural steroid injection provided at least 70% pain relief for more than 3 months. There is no documentation of decreased need for pain medications and functional response following previous injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lumbar epidural steroid injection L5-S1: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. ODG identifies documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of additional epidural steroid injections. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of degeneration of lumbar or lumbosacral intervertebral disc and displacement of lumbar intervertebral disc without myelopathy. In addition, there is documentation of a previous epidural steroid injection. Furthermore, there is documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks. However, there is no documentation of decreased need for pain medications and functional response following previous injection. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Lumbar epidural steroid injection L5-S1 is not medically necessary.