

Case Number:	CM15-0003203		
Date Assigned:	01/14/2015	Date of Injury:	04/26/2012
Decision Date:	03/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/07/2015

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: Psychologist

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 injured worker is a 39year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/26/12. He has reported closed head injury. The diagnoses have included post-op craniotomies; cephalgia, visual problems of right eye, cervical spine strain and depression. Treatment to date has included medications, craniotomy, and psychotherapy. (CT) computerized tomography scan dated 8/28/13 was suspicious for sub-acute or chronic hemorrhage or re-bleed. Currently, the IW complains of neck pain, frequent headaches, blurred vision in both eyes, and depression due to pain. In the progress note dated 10/22/14 the physician noted paravertebral tenderness in the cervical spine with limited motion and requested 20 additional sessions of psychotherapy. On 12/15/14 Utilization Review non-certified 20 additional sessions of individual psychotherapy, noting the clinical indication and necessity could not be determined as there is no current formal cognitive testing or screening. The MTUS, ACOEM Guidelines, (or ODG) was cited. On 1/7/15, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of 20 additional sessions of individual psychotherapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Individual psychotherapy; 20 additional session: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Head Chapter

Decision rationale: Based on the review of the medical records, the injured worker continues to experience cognitive as well as psychological symptoms related to his work-related head injury. It was reported that he completed approximately 15 psychotherapy sessions with [REDACTED] between September 2013 and May 2014. The treatment was then discontinued due to a lack of authorization. In his Psychological Re-Evaluation dated 11/19/14, [REDACTED] presents relevant and appropriate information to substantiate the injured worker's need to resume psychological services. It was recommended in that report that the injured worker receive an additional 20 psychotherapy sessions, for which the request is currently under review. The ODG Psychotherapy Guidelines recommend an "initial trial of 6 visits over 6 weeks" and with evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 13-20 visits over 13-20 weeks (individual sessions)" may be necessary. It further states, "extremely severe cases of combined depression and PTSD may require more sessions if documented that CBT is being done and progress is being made. Psychotherapy lasting for at least a year, or 50 sessions, is more effective than shorter-term psychotherapy for patients with complex mental disorders, according to a meta-analysis of 23 trials. Although short-term psychotherapy is effective for most individuals experiencing acute distress, short-term treatments are insufficient for many patients with multiple or chronic mental disorders or personality disorders. (Leichsenring, 2008)" It is clear that the injured worker's case is complex and that he will likely require longer term treatment. As a result, the request for an additional 20 sessions appears reasonable.