

Case Number:	CM15-0007536		
Date Assigned:	01/26/2015	Date of Injury:	09/15/2000
Decision Date:	03/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/13/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular Medicine

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 63 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/15/2000. The diagnoses have included cervicalgia, cervical degenerative disc disease, cervical spondylolisthesis at C3-4 with facet arthropathy and bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. Currently, the IW complains of bilateral upper extremity numbness and tingling secondary to carpal tunnel syndrome. Objective findings included cervical spine decreased range of motion. There is a positive Durkin's sign of the hand and positive Phalen's and Tinel's of the wrist. On 12/17/2014, Utilization Review non-certified a request for EMG (electromyography) /NCS (nerve conduction studies) for the right upper extremity noting that the clinical information submitted for review fails to meet the evidence based guidelines for the requested service. No references were cited. On 1/13/2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of EMG/NCS for the right upper extremity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Electromyography (EMG)/Nerve Conduction Velocity (NCS) right upper extremity:
 Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 269.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines (MTUS page 303 from ACOEM guidelines), Electromyography (EMG), including H-reflex tests, may be useful to identify subtle, focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with low back symptoms lasting more than three or four weeks. EMG has excellent ability to identify abnormalities related to disc protrusion (MTUS page 304 from ACOEM guidelines). According to MTUS guidelines, needle EMG study helps identify subtle neurological focal dysfunction in patients with neck and arm symptoms. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study Electromyography (EMG), and nerve conduction velocities (NCV), including H-reflex tests, may help identify subtle focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with neck or arm symptoms, or both, lasting more than three or four weeks (page 178). EMG is indicated to clarify nerve dysfunction in case of suspected disc herniation (page 182). EMG is useful to identify physiological insult and anatomical defect in case of neck pain (page 179). There is no documentation of peripheral nerve damage, cervical radiculopathy and entrapment neuropathy that requires electrodiagnostic testing. There is no documentation of significant change in the patient condition. Therefore, the request for Electromyography (EMG)/Nerve Conduction Velocity (NCS) right upper extremity is not medically necessary.