

Case Number:	CM15-0017192		
Date Assigned:	02/04/2015	Date of Injury:	04/22/2014
Decision Date:	04/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/31/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/27/2015

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: Family Practice

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 38 year old female who sustained an industrial injury reported on 4/22/2014. She has reported complaints of the low back and improvement in the right foot/ankle. The diagnoses have included chronic right foot/ankle sprain/strain; facet syndrome; right foot plantar fasciitis; anxiety and depression; and (illegible). Treatments to date have included multiple consultations/evaluations; diagnostic imaging studies; 12 chiropractic treatments; acupuncture treatments; and medication management. The work status classification for this injured worker (IW) was noted to be temporarily totally disabled. On 12/31/2014, Utilization Review (UR) non-certified, for medical necessity, the request, made on 12/23/2014, for an magnetic resonance imaging of the right ankle, without contrast. The Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule and American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Guidelines, chronic pain medical treatment guidelines, topical analgesics, were cited for the Flector Patches. The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Guidelines, ankle and foot complaints, special studies and diagnostic and treatment considerations; and the Official Disability Guidelines, magnetic resonance imaging, chronic ankle, low back, physical medicine, were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the right ankle without contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): Table 14-1; Table 14-5; and Table 14-6.

Decision rationale: The MTUS/ACOEM Guidelines comment on the evaluation of patients with ankle and foot complaints. These guidelines include recommendations that the provider assess for the presence of red flags, which may be indicators for a serious underlying condition. These red flags are described in Table 14-1 of the above-cited MTUS guidelines. In this case, there is no evidence in the medical records that the patient has any of these red flag indicators. The MTUS guidelines also comment on the ability of various techniques to identify and define ankle and foot pathology in Table 14-5. In general, the physical examination provides the best and most consistent means in identifying the underlying cause of the patient's ankle/foot condition. In this case, there is insufficient evidence that the patient has significant physical examination findings that pertain to ankle pathology. For example, on the progress note of 11/3/2014 the note indicates that the patient has tenderness to palpation "on the bottom of the foot and along the plantar fascia." There is no clear documentation that the patient has significant physical examination findings relevant to the right ankle. The MTUS guidelines also comment on the indications for imaging in Table 14-6. These guidelines recommend plain radiographs of the ankle when the patient meets the Ottawa Criteria. Further imaging, to include an MRI are indicated with abnormal findings on plain films. In this case, there is no evidence that the patient meets the above-cited Ottawa Criteria for ankle imaging or already has had abnormal plain films of the ankle. For these reasons, an MRI of the right ankle without contrast is not considered as medically necessary.