

Case Number:	CM15-0018294		
Date Assigned:	02/06/2015	Date of Injury:	11/02/2013
Decision Date:	04/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/07/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/30/2015

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: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Plastic Surgery

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 30 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/2/13. The injured worker suffered burns to the dorsum of the right foot. The documentation noted that he has some amount of post-traumatic stress reliving and worrying about the incident itself and is being seeing for psychological aftereffects. The documentation noted on the PR dated 11/26/14 that was complaining about the appearance both of the donor site as well as areas of scarring on his back as well the foot. There is hyperpigmentation noted with documentation that this is not inappropriately so or unexpectedly so to the donor site. There was also patchy hyperpigmentation to the areas on the flanks there were burned as well as of course the areas of the skin graft itself which was certainly darker than the surrounding skin. His wounds are all closed. The diagnoses have included status post burn to right foot. According to the utilization review performed on 1/7/15, the requested laser resurfacing to burns and donor site has been non-certified. US National Public Library of Medicine; National Institute of Health last updated 2/26/12; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pubmed/21508586>; fractionated laser was used in the utilization review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Laser resurfacing to burns and donor site: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation PubMed.gov - US National Public Library of Medicine; National Institutes for Health Last updated 02/26/2012; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21508586>: Fractionated Laser.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Laser Therapy for Prevention and Treatment of Pathologic Excessive Scars Jin, Rui; Huang, Xiaolu; Li, Hua; Yuan, Yuwen; Li, Bin; Cheng, Chen; Li, Qingfeng *LessPlastic & Reconstructive Surgery*. 132(6):1747-1758, December 2013.

Decision rationale: The patient is a 30 year old male who had suffered work-related thermal injury of the right foot and possibly the flanks. He required skin grafting to the right dorsal foot. He was noted to complain of appearance related issues to the skin graft, donor site and other burned areas. He was not noted to have a functional issue related to his burns. He complained of hyperpigmentation and a 'patulent' appearance. The hyperpigmentation appearance is not 'inappropriate or unexpected. Recommendation was made for laser resurfacing of the burns and donor site. Overall, there is insufficient medical documentation to justify laser resurfacing to the affected areas. There is no specific functional deficit related to his thermal injury or surgical treatment. The main concern is one of appearance, related to hyperpigmentation. The degree of abnormality is not sufficiently documented. The requesting physician notes that the results of the treatment were not inappropriate or unexpected. Photographs were not provided to help to define the degree of severity or whether this could be considered minor or relatively normal. From the reference, lasers can be used for well-defined functional purposes such as hypertrophic scarring (as well as hyperpigmentation). 'Although the mechanism is still unclear, new laser systems including 810/830-nm and 532-nm lasers have also shown promising prospects, and have been proven effective, especially on pigmented hypertrophic scars, and have relieved such symptoms as pain and pruritus.' However, as reasoned above, there has not been sufficient justification for a functional purpose. In addition, reconstruction can be used in an attempt to approximate a more normal appearance. However, the degree of severity is not well-detailed and laser would not be considered the initial treatment of choice as well. Therefore, laser therapy should not be considered medically necessary.