

Case Number:	CM15-0133410		
Date Assigned:	07/21/2015	Date of Injury:	10/31/2008
Decision Date:	08/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/10/2015

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: North Carolina
 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:

This 30-year-old male sustained an industrial injury on 10/31/08. He subsequently reported right knee and low back pain. Diagnoses include lumbar spondylosis with disc protrusion and lumbar/lumbosacral disc degeneration. Treatments to date include MRI testing, right knee surgery, physical therapy and prescription pain medications. The injured worker continues to experience low back pain with radiation to the posterior portion of the right lower extremity. Upon examination, there was right-greater-than left paravertebral spasm and guarding at the lumbar spine. There was sciatic notch tenderness on the right. Strength was 4/ 5 in regard to plantar flexion on the right. Straight leg rising was positive on the right around 60 degrees. The treating physician made a request for Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection under Epidurogram, Fluoroscopic Guidance and Intravenous (IV) sedation.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection under Epidurogram, Fluoroscopic Guidance and Intravenous (IV) sedation: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs) Page(s): 46.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
epidural steroid injections Page(s): 46.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on epidural steroid injections (ESI) states: Criteria for the use of Epidural steroid injections: Note: The purpose of ESI is to reduce pain and inflammation, restoring range of motion and thereby facilitating progress in more active treatment programs, and avoiding surgery, but this treatment alone offers no significant long-term functional benefit. 1) Radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electro diagnostic testing. 2) Initially unresponsive to conservative treatment (exercises, physical methods, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants). 3) Injections should be performed using fluoroscopy (live x-ray) for guidance. 4) If used for diagnostic purposes, a maximum of two injections should be performed. A second block is not recommended if there is inadequate response to the first block. Diagnostic blocks should be at an interval of at least one to two weeks between injections. 5) No more than two nerve root levels should be injected using transforaminal blocks. 6) No more than one interlaminar level should be injected at one session. 7) In the therapeutic phase, repeat blocks should be based on continued objective documented pain and functional improvement, including at least 50% pain relief with associated reduction of medication use for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year. (Manchikanti, 2003) (CMS, 2004) (Boswell, 2007) 8) Current researches do not support "series-of-three" injections in either the diagnostic or the therapeutic phase. We recommend no more than 2 ESI injections. The provided documentation does not show that previous ESI produced 50% reduction in pain lasting 6-8 weeks with medication usage reduction. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.