

Case Number:	CM15-0136743		
Date Assigned:	07/24/2015	Date of Injury:	09/14/2010
Decision Date:	08/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/14/2015

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, Alabama, 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:

This 57 year old woman sustained an industrial injury on 9/14/2010 after reaching for a disabled student and falling. Evaluations include undated lumbar spine x-rays, lumbar spine MRI dated 10/1/2013, and lumbar spine CT scan dated 5/5/2015. Diagnoses include mild lumbar spine disc disease, severe lumbosacral facet arthropathy, and right sacroiliac joint pain. Treatment has included oral medications and epidural steroid injections, right sacroiliac injection, and facet injections. Physician notes dated 6/19/2015 show complaints of low back pain. Recommendations include a series of diagnostic injections and follow up after injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right S1 epidural injection (ESI): 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 ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 309.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, epidural steroid injection is optional for radicular pain to avoid surgery. It may offer short-term benefit, however there is no significant long term benefit or reduction for the need of surgery. Furthermore, the patient file does not document that the patient is candidate for surgery. In addition, there is no evidence that the patient has been unresponsive to conservative treatments. Furthermore, there is no recent clinical and objective documentation of radiculopathy including MRI or EMG/NCV findings. MTUS guidelines do not recommend epidural injections for back pain without radiculopathy. There is no clear documentation of radiculopathy at the level of S1. There is no documentation of efficacy of previous injections. Therefore, Right S1 epidural injection (ESI) is not medically necessary.