

Case Number:	CM15-0143632		
Date Assigned:	08/04/2015	Date of Injury:	04/06/2015
Decision Date:	09/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/24/2015

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: Texas, 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:

This is a 36 year old female patient, who sustained an industrial injury on 4-6-15. The diagnoses have included lateral epicondylitis, tenosynovitis of the hand or wrist, and tenosynovitis of the radial styloid. Per the doctor's note dated 7/1/15, she had complaints of right elbow pain at 4/10. Per the physician progress note dated 6-10-15. She reported that in physical therapy she was using the transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit, which gives her good relief from the forearm, elbow and wrist pain. She is requesting a trial of a home unit. She reported no pain at this time. The physical exam revealed right elbow - tenderness to palpation over the lateral epicondyles and mild pain with resisted flexion and extension on the elbow. The current medications included Ibuprofen over the counter as needed. She has had X-ray of the right elbow dated 4/30/15 with normal findings. She has had right elbow injection on 5/15/2015. She has had activity modification, bracing, physical therapy, splinting and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) for this injury. The physician requested treatments included transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit trial monthly rental for the right elbow QTY: 1.00 and Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit disposable supplies for the right elbow.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENs unit trial, monthly rental, right elbow QTY: 1.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Elbow.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) Page 114-116.

Decision rationale: Patient was using TENS for this injury. Response to the TENS unit in terms of functional improvement and decreased need for medications is not specified in the records provided. According the cited guidelines, TENS is "not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below. While TENS may reflect the long-standing accepted standard of care within many medical communities, the results of studies are inconclusive; the published trials do not provide information on the stimulation parameters which are most likely to provide optimum pain relief, nor do they answer questions about long-term effectiveness".
Recommendations by types of pain: A home-based treatment trial of one month may be appropriate for neuropathic pain and CRPS II (conditions that have limited published evidence for the use of TENS as noted below), and for CRPS I (with basically no literature to support use). Per the MTUS chronic pain guidelines, there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the use or effectiveness of electrical stimulation for chronic pain. The patient does not have any objective evidence of CRPS I and CRPS II that is specified in the records provided. Any evidence of diminished effectiveness of medications or intolerance to medications is not specified in the records provided. The medical necessity of TENS unit trial, monthly rental, right elbow QTY: 1.00 is not established for this patient. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

TENS unit disposable supplies, right elbow: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Elbow.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) Page 114-116.

Decision rationale: Patient was using TENS for this injury. Response to the TENS unit in terms of functional improvement and decreased need for medications is not specified in the records provided. According the cited guidelines, TENS is "not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below. While TENS may reflect the long-standing accepted standard of care within many medical communities, the results of studies are inconclusive; the published trials do not provide information on the stimulation parameters which are most likely to provide optimum pain relief, nor do they answer questions about long-term effectiveness.
"Recommendations by types of pain: A home-based treatment trial of one month may be appropriate for neuropathic pain and CRPS II (conditions that have limited published evidence

for the use of TENS as noted below), and for CRPS I (with basically no literature to support use)." Per the MTUS chronic pain guidelines, there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the use or effectiveness of electrical stimulation for chronic pain. The patient does not have any objective evidence of CRPS I and CRPS II that is specified in the records provided. Any evidence of diminished effectiveness of medications or intolerance to medications is not specified in the records provided. The medical necessity of TENS is not established for this patient. Since the medical necessity of TENS unit is not established, the need for supplies for the TENS unit is also not fully established in this patient. The medical necessity of TENS unit disposable supplies, right elbow is not established for this patient.