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| Case Number: | CM15-0143802 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 08/04/2015 | Date of Injury: | 06/22/2011 |
| Decision Date: | 08/31/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 06/23/2015 |
| 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: 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:

The injured worker is a 28 year old female who sustained an industrial/work injury on 6-22-11. She reported an initial complaint of right shoulder and upper back pain. There was also a cervical spine injury. The injured worker was diagnosed as having post- surgical procedure: right shoulder arthroscopy with persistent stiffness and pain, right upper extremity pain. Treatment to date includes medication, acupuncture, orthopedic consultation, and manipulation under anesthesia, right shoulder surgery in 4-2013, physical therapy, and diagnostics. MRI results were reported on 1-2015 demonstrates mild subacromial bursitis. Currently, the injured worker complained of pain in right shoulder and right arm that is creating difficulty in sleeping, headaches, dizziness, sexual dysfunction and skin scarring. Per the primary physician's report (PR-2) on 5-20-15, exam notes tenderness about the cervical spine and trapezial muscle on the right side. Elevation is possible to 140 degrees and passively to 170 degrees externally rotate to 90 degrees, positive Neer and Hawkin's impingement sign, and neurovascularly intact. Current plan of care included TENS, continue acupuncture, re-evaluation of shoulder, and follow up. The requested treatments include transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS Unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
Page(s): 114-121.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS
Page(s): 114.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation states: TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation). 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. (Carroll-Cochrane, 2001) Several published evidence-based assessments of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) have found that evidence is lacking concerning effectiveness. One problem with current studies is that many only evaluated single-dose treatment, which may not reflect the use of this modality in a clinical setting. Other problems include statistical methodology, small sample size, influence of placebo effect, and difficulty comparing the different outcomes that were measured. This treatment option is recommended as an adjunct to a program of evidence based functional restoration. However, it is recommended for a one-month trial to document subjective and objective gains from the treatment. There is no provided documentation of a one-month trial period with objective measurements of improvement. Therefore criteria have not been met and it is not medically necessary.