

Case Number:	CM15-0145231		
Date Assigned:	08/06/2015	Date of Injury:	11/04/2013
Decision Date:	09/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/27/2015

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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 injured worker is a 45-year-old female who reported an industrial injury 11-4-2013. Her diagnoses, and or impression, were noted to include: bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome with history of resolved symptoms status-post release surgery in 8-2014; and neck muscle strain. No current electrodiagnostic or imaging studies were noted. Her treatments were noted to include: diagnostic studies; surgical intervention; a home exercise program and occupational therapy; splinting of bilateral wrists; medication management; and modified work duties. The progress notes of 7-2-2015 reported wrist pain with recent onset of bilateral hand numbness, and awakening to her hands being asleep, which was aggravated by the recent increase in her job demands for using the keyboard, telephone and driving. Objective findings were noted to include: no distress; tenderness to the right lateral epi, right dorsal wrist nodule-mass of the right hand-elbow, and to the left lateral epi of the left hand-elbow; and increased post-operative neuropathic pain-dysesthesia-hyperalgesia in the left middle finger and ring finger related to neuropraxia, secondary to cannulation at endoscopy - that was improving. The physician's requests for treatments were noted to include the rental of a trans-cutaneous electrical stimulation unit, with supplies, for the bilateral wrists and neck.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS unit and supplies, 1 month rental bilateral wrists/neck: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

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

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work injury in November 2013 and continues to be treated for right neck pain and bilateral hand pain and numbness. Treatments included bilateral carpal tunnel release surgeries in April and August 2014. The surgery on the left side in August 2014 was complicated by neurapraxia. Treatments have included postoperative therapy. When seen, her BMI was over 31. Tinel's testing was positive bilaterally and there was lateral epicondyle tenderness. There was right wrist tenderness with a dorsal nodule. Authorization for a one-month trial of TENS was requested. In terms of TENS, although not recommended as a primary treatment modality, a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option. Indications include pain, inflammation, and muscle spasm and, if effective, can be performed independently by the patient. Low cost basic TENS units are available for home use and supplies such as electrodes can be reused many times. A trial of TENS was medically necessary.