

Case Number:	CM15-0162314		
Date Assigned:	08/28/2015	Date of Injury:	05/22/2007
Decision Date:	09/30/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/18/2015

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 is a 42-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 05-22-2007. Diagnoses include chronic intractable pain; SI (sacroiliac) joint dysfunction; L4-5 and L5-S1 disc degeneration; and right L5-S1 facet arthropathy. Treatment to date has included medications, trigger point injections and modified gym membership. According to the progress report dated 7-21-2015, the IW (injured worker) reported increasing complaints of lower back pain with numbness in the right posterior thigh, rated 8 out of 10 without medications and 3 out of 10 with them. She also complained of mid back pain rated 7 out of 10 without medications and 4 out of 10 with them. On examination, her gait and heel-toe walking was normal. There was palpable tenderness of the lumbar paravertebral muscles bilaterally, over the right sacroiliac joint and over the right lumbosacral junction. Lower extremity pulses were present and there were no sensory deficits. Motor strength of the major muscle groups of the lower extremities was 5 out of 5. Trigger point injections were administered to the right lumbosacral junction for lower back pain. A request was made for right lumbosacral junction trigger point injection with 3ml Celestone (3mg/ml) and 3ml Bupivacaine (5mg/ml) for retrospective date of service: 7/21/15.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective right lumbosacral junction trigger point injection with 3cc Celestone and 3cc Bupivacaine for DOS 7/21/15: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Trigger point injections Page(s): 122.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines trigger point injections Page(s): 122.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on trigger point injections states: Trigger point injections. Recommended only for myofascial pain syndrome as indicated below, with limited lasting value. Not recommended for radicular pain. Trigger point injections with an anesthetic such as Bupivacaine are recommended for non-resolving trigger points, but the addition of a corticosteroid is not generally recommended. Not recommended for radicular pain. A trigger point is a discrete focal tenderness located in a palpable taut band of skeletal muscle, which produces a local twitch in response to stimulus to the band. Trigger points may be present in up to 33-50% of the adult population. Myofascial pain syndrome is a regional painful muscle condition with a direct relationship between a specific trigger point and its associated pain region. These injections may occasionally be necessary to maintain function in those with myofascial problems when myofascial trigger points are present on examination. Not recommended for typical back pain or neck pain. (Graff-Radford, 2004) (Nelemans-Cochrane, 2002) For fibromyalgia syndrome, trigger point injections have not been proven effective. (Goldenberg, 2004) Criteria for the use of Trigger point injections: Trigger point injections with a local anesthetic may be recommended for the treatment of chronic low back or neck pain with myofascial pain syndrome when all of the following criteria are met: (1) Documentation of circumscribed trigger points with evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain; (2) Symptoms have persisted for more than three months; (3) Medical management therapies such as ongoing stretching exercises, physical therapy, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants have failed to control pain; (4) Radiculopathy is not present (by exam, imaging, or neuro-testing); (5) Not more than 3-4 injections per session; (6) No repeat injections unless a greater than 50% pain relief is obtained for six weeks after an injection and there is documented evidence of functional improvement; (7) Frequency should not be at an interval less than two months; (8) Trigger point injections with any substance (e.g., saline or glucose) other than local anesthetic with or without steroid are not recommended. (Colorado, 2002) (BlueCross BlueShield, 2004) The provided clinical documentation fail to show circumscribed trigger points with evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain. Therefore, criteria have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.