

Case Number:	CM15-0165512		
Date Assigned:	09/03/2015	Date of Injury:	01/04/2007
Decision Date:	10/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/24/2015

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, New York, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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:

The applicant is a represented [REDACTED] who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of January 4, 2007. In a Utilization Review report dated August 12, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections. The claims administrator referenced a July 1, 2015 office visit in the determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On said July 1, 2015 office visit, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of knee pain. The applicant was working regular duty despite the same, it was reported. The applicant had undergone earlier viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections in 2001, it was reported. Standing and walking had become more problematic over time. The applicant was given operating diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis. The applicant was on glucosamine chondroitin for the same. Crepitation was appreciated on exam. Supartz (viscosupplementation) injections were sought. The applicant was 60 years old, it was reported. X-rays of the knee apparently demonstrated arthritic changes about the knee, the treating provider reported.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Supartz injection X 3 to left knee: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee & Leg, Hyaluronic acid injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed., Knee Disorders, pg. 687 Recommendation: Intra-articular Knee Viscosupplementation Injections for Moderate to Severe Knee Osteoarthritis Intra-articular knee viscosupplementation injections are recommended for treatment of moderate to severe knee osteoarthritis. Indications Knee pain from osteoarthritis that is unsatisfactorily controlled with NSAIDs, acetaminophen, weight loss, or exercise strategies. Four of six comparative trials found viscosupplementation injections superior to glucocorticosteroid injections with longer duration of benefits, so these injections may be a treatment option for osteoarthritis non-responsive to non-invasive treatments.^{1284, 1302-1304} There is moderate- quality evidence that these injections are more effective in patients aged 60 to 75.¹³⁰⁵.

Decision rationale: The request for Supartz (viscosupplementation) injections was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. The MTUS does not address the topic. However, the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Disorder Chapter notes that viscosupplementation injections are indicated in the treatment of knee osteoarthritis, as was seemingly present here. ACOEM further notes that the target age group for viscosupplementation injections is 60-75. Here, the applicant was 60 years of age and, thus, in the target age group. Moving forward with the proposed viscosupplementation (Supartz) injection was, thus, indicated. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.