

Case Number:	CM15-0187383		
Date Assigned:	09/29/2015	Date of Injury:	08/12/2010
Decision Date:	11/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/27/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/23/2015

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: California, Arizona, Maryland
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Psychiatry

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 54-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 8-12-10. He reported neck and back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic neck pain secondary to cervical degenerative disc disease status post cervical fusion at C3-4 with degenerative disc disease at C5-7, chronic intractable low back pain secondary to multilevel lumbosacral degenerative disc disease with spondylosis and facet arthropathy at L4-S1, severe neuropathic pain, chronic pain syndrome, opioid dependence, and sexual dysfunction. On 3-31-15 the injured worker was diagnosed with adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood secondary to chronic pain. Treatment to date has included C3-4 fusion in 2013, physical therapy, TENS, and medication including Opana, Sertraline, and Temazepam. On 8-11-15 the treating physician noted "difficulty with coping and feeling hopeless is contributing to worsening pain and chronic pain syndrome." On 8-11-15, the injured worker complained of sadness and anger regarding his health and frustration with general decline in function. On 8-19-15, the treating physician requested authorization for cognitive behavioral therapy x8. On 8-27-15, the request was non-certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

CBT X 8: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Psychological treatment.

Decision rationale: California MTUS states that behavioral interventions are recommended. The identification and reinforcement of coping skills is often more useful in the treatment of pain than ongoing medication or therapy, which could lead to psychological or physical dependence. ODG Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) guidelines for chronic pain recommends screening for patients with risk factors for delayed recovery, including fear avoidance beliefs. Initial therapy for these "at risk" patients should be physical medicine for exercise instruction, using cognitive motivational approach to physical medicine. Consider separate psychotherapy CBT referral after 4 weeks if lack of progress from physical medicine alone: Initial trial of 3-4 psychotherapy visits over 2 weeks. With evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 6-10 visits over 5-6 weeks (individual sessions). The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic neck pain secondary to cervical degenerative disc disease status post cervical fusion at C3-4 with degenerative disc disease at C5-7, chronic intractable low back pain secondary to multilevel lumbosacral degenerative disc disease with spondylosis and facet arthropathy at L4-S1, severe neuropathic pain. Upon review of the submitted documentation, it is gathered that the injured worker suffers from chronic pain secondary to industrial trauma and would be a good candidate for behavioral treatment of chronic pain. However, the request for Psychotherapy, 8 sessions exceeds the guideline recommendations for an initial trial and thus is not medically necessary at this time.