

Case Number:	CM15-0195516		
Date Assigned:	10/09/2015	Date of Injury:	12/06/2000
Decision Date:	11/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/05/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 66 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 12-06-2000. The injured worker was diagnosed as having sciatica, unspecified site. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, epidural steroid injections, and medications. On 8-19-2015, the injured worker complains of "moderate" back pain with radiculopathy to the right lower extremity. Exam noted "exquisite tenderness in the right SI joint", pelvic compression test referred some pain to the right sacroiliac joint area, right straight leg raise produced buttock pain, and left straight leg raise produced low back pain. Motor exam "was felt to be normal in all major muscle groups of the lower extremities". Sensory exam was "normal to light touch". It was documented that she had done well in the past with lumbar epidural injection. On 7-29-2015, her pain average pain was rated 7 out of 10, limiting her ability to garden, walk, hike and shop, and medication use included Suboxone, and Oxycodone, noting that over the years "she has taken a variety of different opioid medications". The treatment plan included ultrasonic injection of the right sacroiliac joint (done on 8-19-2015) for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, non-certified by Utilization Review on 9-11-2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultrasonic injection of the right sacroiliac joint done on 8/19/15: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Hip and Pelvis Chapter (updated 08/20/15) - Online Version, Sacroiliac joint blocks.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Hip Chapter, SI Joint, pages 263-264.

Decision rationale: ODG note etiology for SI joint disorder includes degenerative joint disease, joint laxity, and trauma (such as a fall to the buttock). The main cause is SI joint disruption from significant pelvic trauma. Sacroiliac dysfunction is poorly defined and the diagnosis is often difficult to make due to the presence of other low back pathology (including spinal stenosis and facet arthropathy). The diagnosis is also difficult to make as pain symptoms may depend on the region of the SI joint that is involved (anterior, posterior, and/or extra-articular ligaments). Although SI joint injection is recommended as an option for clearly defined diagnosis with at least 3 positive specific tests for motion palpation and pain provocation for SI joint dysfunction, none have been demonstrated on medical reports submitted. It has also been questioned as to whether SI joint blocks are the diagnostic gold standard as the block is felt to show low sensitivity, and discordance has been noted between two consecutive blocks questioning validity. There is also concern that pain relief from diagnostic blocks may be confounded by infiltration of extra-articular ligaments, adjacent muscles, or sheaths of the nerve roots themselves. Submitted reports have not clearly defined symptom complaints, documented specific clinical findings or met the guidelines criteria with ADL limitations, failed conservative treatment trials, or functional improvement from treatment previously rendered for this chronic injury. The Ultrasonic injection of the right sacroiliac joint done on 8/19/15 is not medically necessary and appropriate.