

Case Number:	CM15-0197803		
Date Assigned:	10/13/2015	Date of Injury:	09/18/2006
Decision Date:	11/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/08/2015

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, Oregon, Washington
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

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 was a 40 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury, September 16, 2006. The injured worker was undergoing treatment for bilateral knee degenerative joint disease, right internal derangement with severe chondromalacia of the patella status post right knee patellar replacement and degenerative joint disease of the left knee and chondromalacia. According to progress note of August 25, 2015, the injured worker's chief complaint was pain in both knees, right being significantly worse than the left knee. The injured worker reported the right knee giving way with a grinding sensation and popping. The injured worker rated the pain at 3-4 out of 10 with pain medication and 7-8 out of 10 without. The physical exam noted right knee with audible popping and grinding through range of motion. The right knee range of motion was 5-110 degrees. There was pain in the medial and lateral joint lines, but no effusion or redness noted. There appeared to be laxity to stress testing of the ACL posteriorly and anteriorly, but negative McMurray's. The treating physician recommended arthroscopic surgery for debridement in an attempt to remove any scarified tissue; other chondral defects and possible meniscal tearing that might be present in order to obtain more time to defer a right total knee replacement. The injured worker previously received the following treatments bilateral knee Orthovisc injections that reduced the pain for about 5-6 months, right knee x-rays in January 2015 showed the right patella placement to be intact, Norco for pain. The RFA (request for authorization) dated August 20, 2015; the following treatments were requested right knee arthroscopy with debridement. The UR (utilization review board) denied certification on September 15, 2015 for right knee arthroscopy with debridement.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right knee Arthroscopy with debridement: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Knee & Leg, Arthroscopic surgery for osteoarthritis.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee and Leg Chapter, Arthroscopic Surgery for osteoarthritis.

Decision rationale: According to ODG, Knee and Leg Chapter, Arthroscopic Surgery for osteoarthritis, "Not recommended. Arthroscopic lavage and debridement in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee is no better than placebo surgery, and arthroscopic surgery provides no additional benefit compared to optimized physical and medical therapy." As the patient has significant osteoarthritis, the requested knee arthroscopy is not medically necessary.