

Case Number:	CM15-0197867		
Date Assigned:	10/14/2015	Date of Injury:	02/09/2009
Decision Date:	12/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/23/2015
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, Montana

Certification(s)/Specialty: Chiropractor, Oriental 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 injured worker is a 38-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 2-9-2009. Diagnoses have included complex regional pain syndrome, type I; migraine; tension-type headache, bilateral; shoulder-hand syndrome, right; and, cervical radiculitis. In the past was she was being treated for carpal tunnel syndrome, De Quervain's, and shoulder pain. Diagnostic 7-9-2015 MRI of the cervical spine revealed degenerative disc disease at C3-5 through C6-7, facet arthropathy C7-T1 and C3-4, and the physician's note interpreted a possible C6-7 cervical radiculitis. On 8-25-2-15 the injured worker presented with neck pain and headaches noted to become worse with neck extension and flexion. On 4-8-2015 she had reported "new symptoms" of pain and tingling in her neck at C6-8 over the posterior spine and paraspinally for the previous several months. She stated it would last for several hours each day, and skin was tender. At that time she stated it was not interfering with activities of daily living. Objective examination revealed trigger points over the upper trapezius muscles with 1+ muscle spasm. Normal range of motion was "normal," and there was no tenderness with palpation to the cervical spine. Also noted was hyperalgesia over the right forearm and wrist in a non-dermatomal distribution. Treatment relating to this injury has included medication. The treating physician's plan of care includes possible epidural steroid injections, and a request was submitted for 12 sessions of cervical acupuncture, but all sessions were denied on 9-23-2015. She is temporarily totally disabled.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture Cervical Spine #12 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment 2007.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment 2007.

Decision rationale: Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 12 acupuncture sessions for cervical spine which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Medical records discuss functional improvement but not in a specific and verifiable manner consistent with the definition of functional improvement as stated in guidelines. The documentation fails to provide baseline of activities of daily living and examples of improvement in activities of daily living as result of acupuncture. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, additional 12 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.