

Case Number:	CM15-0203798		
Date Assigned:	10/20/2015	Date of Injury:	05/30/2013
Decision Date:	12/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/21/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/16/2015

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: Montana, Oregon, Idaho
 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:

This is a 54 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 5-30-2013. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatment for right rotator cuff tear, right rotator cuff impingement and left knee meniscus tear. According to the progress report dated 9-11-2015, the injured worker complained of posterior leg pain and tightness and second toe numbness. She reported continued popping and some stiffness. Objective findings (9-11-2015) revealed "Range of motion: NL, Extension 0-0, Flexion 130-130." Treatment has included left knee arthroscopy (1-2015), physical therapy and medications (Tramadol). The physician noted (9-11-2015) that x-rays showed medial joint space narrowing and superior patella traction spur. The request for authorization was dated 9-14-2015. The original Utilization Review (UR) (9-21-2015) denied a request for left knee orthovisc series x3.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Left knee orthovisc series times 3: 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), Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) Chapter (Online Version).

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.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS/ACOEM is silent regarding the request for viscosupplementation for the knee. According to the ODG Knee and leg chapter, Hyaluronic acid injection, it is indicated for patients with documented severe osteoarthritis of the knee and patients who have failed 3 months of conservative nonpharmacologic (e.g. exercise) and pharmacologic treatments or are intolerant of these therapies. Criteria for Hyaluronic acid injections: Patients experience significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis but have not responded adequately to recommended conservative nonpharmacologic (e.g., exercise) and pharmacologic treatments or are intolerant of these therapies (e.g., gastrointestinal problems related to anti-inflammatory medications), after at least 3 months; Documented symptomatic severe osteoarthritis of the knee, which may include the following: Bony enlargement; Bony tenderness; Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion; Less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness; No palpable warmth of synovium; Over 50 years of age. Pain interferes with functional activities (e.g., ambulation, prolonged standing) and not attributed to other forms of joint disease; Failure to adequately respond to aspiration and injection of intra-articular steroids; Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance; Are not currently candidates for total knee replacement or who have failed previous knee surgery for their arthritis, unless younger patients wanting to delay total knee replacement. (Wen, 2000) Repeat series of injections: If documented significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more, and symptoms recur, may be reasonable to do another series. No maximum established by high quality scientific evidence; see Repeat series of injections above. Hyaluronic acid injections are not recommended for any other indications such as chondromalacia patellae, facet joint arthropathy, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral arthritis, patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain), plantar nerve entrapment syndrome, or for use in joints other than the knee (e.g., ankle, carpo-metacarpal joint, elbow, hip, metatarsophalangeal joint, shoulder, and temporomandibular joint) because the effectiveness of hyaluronic acid injections for these indications has not been established. There is no arthroscopic or radiographic documentation of severe osteoarthritis, and no documentation of a failed corticosteroid injection in the exam note from 9/11/15, the request does not meet the cited guidelines and is not medically necessary.