

Case Number:	CM15-0205877		
Date Assigned:	10/22/2015	Date of Injury:	01/29/2013
Decision Date:	12/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/02/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/19/2015

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: North Carolina
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 45 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 1-29-2013. A review of medical record indicates the injured worker is being treated for left wrist DeQuervains, left hand numbness, possibly cubital tunnel, carpal tunnel syndrome, and left shoulder pain, mostly periscapular muscle pain. Medical records dated 9-21-2015 noted pain in her whole arm. Symptoms are exacerbated by use of the arm and are relieved by rest. She is currently working modified duty. Physical examination noted there is mild swelling and sharp tenderness over the 1st dorsal extensor compartment. There was pain with resisted thumb extension and abduction. There was tenderness over the proximal forearm. Radiographs dated 9-21-2015 of the left wrist revealed no fractures, dislocations, masses, or arthritic changes. EMG-NCS of the left upper extremity dated 2-20-2014 was noted as normal. Treatment has included Ibuprofen and a thumb spica brace. Utilization review form dated 10-2-2015 noncertified EMG of the left and right upper extremity and NCS of the right and left upper extremity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Electromyograph (EMG) and nerve conduction velocity (NCV) of bilateral upper extremities: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Elbow Complaints 2007, and Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints 2004. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Elbow, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Electromyography, Nerve conduction studies.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Neck and Upper Back Complaints 2004, Section(s): Special Studies.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM chapter on neck and upper back complaints and special diagnostic studies states: Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination, electrodiagnostic studies, laboratory tests, or bone scans. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Electromyography (EMG), and nerve conduction velocities (NCV), including H-reflex tests, may help identify subtle focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with neck or arm symptoms, or both, lasting more than three or four weeks. The assessment may include sensory-evoked potentials (SEPs) if spinal stenosis or spinal cord myelopathy is suspected. If physiologic evidence indicates tissue insult or nerve impairment, consider a discussion with a consultant regarding next steps, including the selection of an imaging test to define a potential cause (magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] for neural or other soft tissue, compute tomography [CT] for bony structures). Additional studies may be considered to further define problem areas. The recent evidence indicates cervical disk annular tears may be missed on MRIs. The clinical significance of such a finding is unclear, as it may not correlate temporally or anatomically with symptoms. The provided documentation does not show any signs of emergence of red flags or subtle physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction. There is no mention of planned invasive procedures. There are no subtle neurologic findings listed on the physical exam. For these reasons criteria for special diagnostic testing has not been met per the ACOEM. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.