

Case Number:	CM15-0207052		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2015	Date of Injury:	12/09/2011
Decision Date:	12/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/21/2015

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: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina
Certification(s)/Specialty: Plastic 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 is a 63-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12-9-2011 and has been treated for osteoarthritis of the right first CMC joint. There are no diagnostic studies provided. On 9-28-2015, the injured worker reported continued, constant pain in the right thumb base rated at 5 out of 10 and worse with activity. He stated there was no numbness. No objective findings are documented from that visit. Documented treatment includes cortisone injections, a previous unspecified trigger finger release on 1-9-2013, and Motrin. The treating physician's plan of care includes right hand arthroplasty - reconstruction ligament and trapeziectomy which was modified on 9-29-2015 to right hand arthroplasty with trapeziectomy. Current work status is recent retirement.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right hand arthroplasty- reconstruction ligament and trapeziectomy: 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) Forearm, Wrist & Hand Procedure Summary last updated 6/29/2015- Indications for joint replacement of the finger or thumb and trapeziectomy.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Trapeziectomy.

Decision rationale: The patient is a 63 year old male with chronic right thumb pain associated with degenerative osteoarthritis of the thumb CMC joint. He has failed reasonable conservative management of splinting, hand therapy, medical management and steroid injections. His diagnosis is supported by radiographic studies. Thus, right thumb CMC arthroplasty should be considered medically necessary. However, based on ODG guidelines, the recommended procedure is trapeziectomy and not LRTI (ligament reconstruction and tendon interposition). From the ODG, trapeziectomy is recommended among the different surgeries used to treat persistent pain and dysfunction at the base of the thumb from osteoarthritis, trapeziectomy is safer and has fewer complications than the other procedures. Participants who underwent trapeziectomy had 16% fewer adverse effects than the other commonly used procedures studied in this review; conversely, those who underwent trapeziectomy with ligament reconstruction and tendon interposition had 11% more (including scar tenderness, tendon adhesion or rupture, sensory change, or Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Type 1). (Wajon, 2005) (Field, 2007) (Raven, 2006) Therefore, without greater justification for the more complex surgical intervention, it is not medically necessary. The UR had modified the certification to trapeziectomy only, which is consistent with this review.