

Case Number:	CM15-0209048		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2015	Date of Injury:	08/21/2015
Decision Date:	12/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/23/2015

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 47 year old male who sustained an industrial injury August 21, 2015. According to an initial handwritten examination summary, dated September 8, 2015, the injured worker presented reporting improved right elbow pain, mild olecranon bursa pain, no streaking. Some handwritten notes were difficult to decipher. Diagnoses are bursitis, olecranon epicondylitis. Treatment plan is checked off medication - continue current therapy (unspecified). At issue, is a request for authorization dated September 8, 2015, for an MRI of the right elbow without contrast. There are no other medical records available for review. According to utilization review dated October 5, 2015, the request for an MRI of the right elbow without contrast per 09- 08-2015 order is non-certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI Right Elbow without Contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Elbow Complaints 2007, Section(s): Recommendations.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM chapter on elbow complaints and imaging studies states: Special Studies and Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations. Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: The imaging study results will substantially change the treatment plan. Emergence of a red flag. Failure to progress in a rehabilitation program, evidence of significant tissue insult or neurological dysfunction that has been shown to be correctible by invasive treatment, and agreement by the patient to undergo invasive treatment if the presence of the correctible lesion is confirmed. For most patients presenting with elbow problems, special studies are not needed unless a period of at least 4 weeks of conservative care and observation fails to improve their symptoms. Most patients improve quickly, provided red flag conditions are ruled out. There are a few exceptions to the rule to avoid special studies absent red flags in the first month. These exceptions include: Plain-film radiography to rule out osteomyelitis or joint effusion in cases of significant septic olecranon bursitis. Electromyography (EMG) study if cervical radiculopathy is suspected as a cause of lateral arm pain, and that condition has been present for at least 6 weeks. Nerve conduction study and possibly EMG if severe nerve entrapment is suspected on the basis of physical examination, denervation atrophy is likely, and there is a failure to respond to conservative treatment. For patients with limitations of activity after 4 weeks and unexplained physical findings such as effusion or localized pain (especially following exercise), imaging may be indicated to clarify the diagnosis and revise the treatment strategy if appropriate. Imaging findings should be correlated with physical findings. In general, an imaging study may be an appropriate consideration for a patient whose limitations due to consistent symptoms have persisted for 1 month or more, as in the following cases: When surgery is being considered for a specific anatomic defect. To further evaluate potentially serious pathology, such as a possible tumor, when the clinical examination suggests the diagnosis. There is no documentation of red flags on the provided physical exam. There is no documentation of failure to progress in a rehabilitation program, evidence of significant tissue insult or plans on imminent surgical intervention. The criteria as outlined above per the ACOEM for imaging studies of the elbow have not been met. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.