

Case Number:	CM15-0209773		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2015	Date of Injury:	08/19/2013
Decision Date:	12/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/26/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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:

This 62 year old female sustained an industrial injury on 8-19-13. Documentation indicated that the injured worker was receiving treatment for lumbar spine sprain and strain and myofascial pain syndrome. Previous treatment included epidural steroid injections, medial branch blocks and medications. Magnetic resonance imaging lumbar spine (5-8-14) showed lumbar facet arthritis at L4-5 and L5-S1, discogenic changes at L2-3 and a very small foraminal protrusion at L4-5. In a PR-2 dated 10-6-15, the physician noted that the injured worker had medial branch blocks two weeks ago and "felt better". The injured worker still complained of pain in the left sacroiliac joint with some spasm. The injured worker was taking medications with relief. Physical exam was remarkable for tenderness to palpation to the left sacroiliac joint with positive Faber's and Gaenslen's tests. The remaining physical exam was remarkable for was difficult to decipher. The treatment plan included requesting authorization for left sacroiliac joint injection and medications (Omeprazole, Flexeril, Neurontin, Voltaren and Lidopro). On 10-12-15, Utilization Review noncertified a request for left sacroiliac joint injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Left sacroiliac joint injection: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Chapter: Hip/Pelvis.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Hip and Pelvis Chapter/Sacroiliac Joint Blocks Section.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines do not address the use of sacroiliac joint injections. The ODG recommends sacroiliac joint blocks as an option if the injured worker has failed at least 4-6 weeks of aggressive conservative therapy. The criteria for the use of sacroiliac blocks include 1) history and physical should suggest the diagnosis with documentation of at least 3 positive exam findings 2) diagnostic evaluation must first address any other possible pain generators 3) the patient has had and failed at least 4-6 weeks of aggressive conservative therapy including physical therapy, home exercise and medication management 4) blocks are performed under fluoroscopy 5) a positive diagnostic response is recorded as 80% for the duration of the local anesthetic, and if the first block is not positive, a second diagnostic block is not performed 6) If steroids are injected during the initial injection the duration of pain relief should be at least 6 weeks with at least >70% pain relief recorded for this period 7) in the treatment phase the suggested frequency for repeat blocks is 2 months or longer provided that at least 70% pain relief is obtained for 6 weeks 8) the block is not to be performed on the same day as a lumbar epidural steroid injection, transforaminal epidural steroid injection, facet joint injection or medial branch block 9) in treatment phase the interventional procedures should be repeated only as necessary judging by the medical necessity criteria and should be limited to a maximum of 4 times for local anesthetic and steroid blocks over a period of 1 year. In this case, the injured worker still complained of pain in the left sacroiliac joint with some spasm 2 weeks post medial branch block. The history and physical examination do provide documentation of at least 3 positive exam findings. The diagnostic evaluation has addresses other possible causes of pain. The injured worker has failed with extended conservative treatments. The request for left sacroiliac joint injection is medically necessary.