

Case Number:	CM15-0024346		
Date Assigned:	02/13/2015	Date of Injury:	01/19/2008
Decision Date:	04/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/09/2015

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: Pennsylvania

Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal Medicine, Hospice & Palliative 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:

The injured worker is a 69-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 01/19/2008. Current diagnoses include osteoarthritis and knee pain. Previous treatments included medication management, prior Orthovisc injections, and cortisone injection. Report dated 01/09/2015 noted that the injured worker presented with complaints that included bilateral knee pain. Physical examination was positive for abnormal findings. X-ray report of both knees dated 01/09/2015, shows bilateral degenerative arthritis of the knees with lateral joint space narrowing. Utilization review performed on 01/26/2015 non-certified a prescription for Orthovisc injection series of 3 for the left knee, based on the clinical information submitted does not support medical necessity. The reviewer referenced the California MTUS, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines in making this decision.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Orthovisc Injection series of 3, left knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Treatment in Workers Compensation, Online Edition, Chapter Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic), Hyaluronic acid injections, Criteria for Hyaluronic acid injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Orthovisc, DePuy Mitek Inc. <http://www.orthovisc.com/orthovisc>. Accessed on 04/06/2015. Roberts Jr WN, et al. Intraarticular and soft tissue injections: What agent(s) to inject and how frequently Topic 7985, version 12.0. Up To Date, accessed on 03/13/2015. Kalunian KC, et al. Treatment of osteoarthritis resistant to initial pharmacologic therapy. Topic 16698, version 12.0. Up-to-date, accessed on 03/03/2015.

Decision rationale: Orthovisc (high molecular weight hyaluronan) is a medication in the hyaluronic acid derivative class that can be injected into joints. The MTUS Guidelines are silent on this issue. The literature supports its use in the treatment of osteoarthritis in the knee when symptoms have not improved despite treatment with acetaminophen with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and with glucocorticoids injected into the knee or these treatments were not tolerated. The goal of therapy is improved pain intensity and/or function. This medication is FDA-approved for weekly injections for three to four weeks. There is limited literature describing the safety, efficacy, and ideal frequency of treating with repeated series of injections. The submitted and reviewed documentation concluded the worker was suffering from degenerative arthritis involving both knees. There was no discussion detailing special circumstances that sufficiently supported this request. In the absence of such evidence, the current request for a series of three injections of Orthovisc (high molecular weight hyaluronan) into the left knee is not medically necessary.