

Case Number:	CM15-0218375		
Date Assigned:	11/10/2015	Date of Injury:	05/05/2003
Decision Date:	12/21/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/05/2015

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: Arizona, California
 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 57 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 5-5-2003. Several documents within the submitted medical records are difficult to decipher. The injured worker is undergoing treatment for chondromalacia and left lateral meniscus tear. Medical records dated 9-25-2015 indicate the injured worker complains of increasing left knee pain and stiffness. Physical exam dated 9-25-2015 notes antalgic gait and left knee tenderness to palpation, crepitus and decreased range of motion (ROM). The treating physician on 9-25-2015 indicates prior Orthovisc injections good response. The original utilization review dated 10-13-2015 indicates the request for Orthovisc injection X 3left knee is non-certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Orthovisc Injection x3 Left Knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Knee and Leg.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Knee Complaints 2004, Section(s): Summary. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) knee chapter and pg 36.

Decision rationale: According to the guidelines criteria for Hyaluronic acid injections: Patients experience significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis but have not responded adequately to recommended conservative non-pharmacologic (e.g., exercise) and pharmacologic treatments or are intolerant of these therapies (e.g., gastrointestinal problems related to anti-inflammatory medications), after at least 3 months. Documented symptomatic severe osteoarthritis of the knee according to American College of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria, which requires knee pain and at least 5 of the following: (1) Bony enlargement; (2) Bony tenderness; (3) Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion; (4) Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) less than 40 mm/hr; (5) Less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness; (6) No palpable warmth of synovium; (7) Over 50 years of age; (8) Rheumatoid factor less than 1:40 titer (agglutination method); (9) Synovial fluid signs (clear fluid of normal viscosity and WBC less than 2000/mm³). Pain interferes with functional activities (e.g., ambulation, prolonged standing) and not attributed to other forms of joint disease; Failure to adequately respond to aspiration and injection of intra-articular steroids;- Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance. Are not currently candidates for total knee replacement or who have failed previous knee surgery for their arthritis, unless younger patients wanting to delay total knee replacement. Repeat series of injections: If documented significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more, and symptoms recur, may be reasonable to do another series. No maximum established by high quality scientific evidence. In this case, the exam findings do not meet the criteria for arthritis as above. In addition the claimant received an unknown amount of injections in the past and at an unknown time. The request for another set of Synvisc injections is not well supported in the notes and is not medically necessary.