

Case Number:	CM15-0032667		
Date Assigned:	02/26/2015	Date of Injury:	06/09/2011
Decision Date:	04/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/20/2015

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: Chiropractor, Oriental 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 55 year old man sustained an industrial injury on 6/9/2011 after lifting a heavy tire above his head. Treatment has included oral medications, physical therapy, and cervical epidural steroid injection. Physician notes dated 12/12/2014 show complaints of worsening headache and cervical spine pain. Recommendations include restart Vicodin, Continue Ibuprofen, epidural steroid injection, and follow up in one month. On 2/18/2015, Utilization Review evaluated a prescription for eight acupuncture sessions for the cervical spine that was submitted on 2/20/2015. The UR physician noted the current request is in excess of the recommended amount of trial sessions. The MTUS, ACOEM Guidelines, (or ODG) was cited. The request was denied and subsequently appealed to Independent Medical Review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 Acupuncture sessions for the cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has not had prior Acupuncture treatment. Provider requested initial trial of 8 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Per guidelines 3-6 treatments are supported for initial course of Acupuncture with evidence of functional improvement prior to consideration of additional care. Requested visits exceed the quantity of initial acupuncture visits supported by the cited guidelines. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. MTUS- Definition 9792.20 (f) Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam. Per guidelines and review of evidence, 8 Acupuncture visits are not medically necessary.