

Case Number:	CM15-0034847		
Date Assigned:	03/03/2015	Date of Injury:	05/08/2014
Decision Date:	04/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/24/2015

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, Indiana, New York
Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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 52-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 05/08/2014. She has reported subsequent back pain and was diagnosed with lumbar sprain, acquired spondylolisthesis and lumbar radiculitis. Treatment to date has included oral pain medication, a Cortisone injection, physical therapy and surgery. In a physical therapy progress note dated 01/05/2015, the injured worker complained of right knee pain that was rated as 8/10. The therapist noted that the plan included electrical stimulation, which was requested.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Home neuromuscular electrical stimulator: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES devices) Page(s): 121.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain section, Neuromuscular electrical muscle stimulator.

Decision rationale: Pursuant to the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines and the Official Disability Guidelines, neuromuscular electrical stimulator home use is not medically necessary. Neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES devices) are not recommended. NMES is primarily used as part of a rehabilitation program following stroke and there is no evidence to support its use in chronic pain. TENS is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, including reductions in medication use. The Official Disability Guidelines enumerate the criteria for the use of TENS. The criteria include, but are not limited to, a one month trial period of the TENS trial; there is evidence that appropriate pain modalities have been tried and failed; other ongoing pain treatment should be documented during the trial including medication usage; specific short and long-term goals should be submitted; etc. See the guidelines for additional details. In this case, the injured worker's working diagnoses are chondromalacia patella knee; muscle weakness; muscle disuse atrophy; December 30, 2014 right knee arthroscopy with partial medial and lateral mastectomy/chondroplasty. Subjectively, the injured worker completed 12 sessions of physical therapy. However, she remains weak with ongoing sharp anterior pain. Objectively, the patella had normal tracking with pain and crepitus on motion. Motor exam shows 4/5 quad strength with five-second endurance straight leg. Neuromuscular electrical stimulators (NMES) are not recommended. NMES is primarily used as part of a rehabilitation program following stroke and there is no evidence to support its use in chronic pain. Consequently, absent guideline recommendations for an NMES, neuromuscular electrical stimulator home use is not medically necessary.