

Case Number:	CM15-0035310		
Date Assigned:	03/03/2015	Date of Injury:	09/18/2014
Decision Date:	04/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/25/2015

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 44 year old male, who sustained a work related injury on 9/18/14. He was attaching a trailer to a low hitch on a truck. The diagnoses have included lumbar spine disc disorder. Treatments to date have included CT scan lumbar spine dated 9/19/14, MRI lumbar spine dated 11/19/14, physical therapy with benefits, anti-inflammatory medication, rest, and steroid injections - nerve root block dated 2/12/15 which were beneficial. In the PR-2 dated 1/4/15, the injured worker complains of low back pain. He has pressure, numbness and tingling down legs. The request is for sedation for the nerve root block. On 2/13/15, Utilization Review non-certified a request for full sedation for bilateral selective nerve root block at L3-4 under fluoroscopy. The ODG was cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Full sedation for bilateral selective nerve root block at L3-4 under fluoroscopy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation (ODG) Official Disability Guidelines Pain, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs).

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, Epidural steroid injections.

Decision rationale: Pursuant to the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines and the Official Disability Guidelines, full sedation for bilateral selective nerve root blocks at L3 - L4 under fluoroscopy is not medically necessary. There is no evidence based literature to make a firm recommendation as to sedation during the SI. The use of sedation introduces potential diagnostic and safety issues making it unnecessary than ideal. A major concern is that sedation may result in the inability of the patient to experience the expected pain and paresthesias associated with spinal cord irritation. Routine use is not recommended except for patients with anxiety. In this case, the injured worker's working diagnoses are leg pain despite physical therapy; and pain in buttock radiating down thigh to the shin. The treating physician indicates the injured worker is apprehensive regarding the procedure. The evidence-based guidelines, however, do not recommend full sedation for an epidural steroid injection. Routine use is not recommended except for patients with anxiety. There are no subjective or objective complaints in the medical record indicating full sedation is clinically indicated. Consequently, absent clinical documentation with subjective and objective findings indicating full sedation is required for the ESI, full sedation for bilateral selective nerve root blocks at L3 - L4 under fluoroscopy is not medically necessary.