

Case Number:	CM15-0051844		
Date Assigned:	03/25/2015	Date of Injury:	09/02/2012
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/19/2015

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: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 54 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on September 2, 2012. She has reported neck pain, shoulder pain, arm pain, wrist pain, and anxiety. Diagnoses have included left DeQuervain's tenosynovitis, left medial epicondylitis, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, bilateral shoulder impingement, cervical spine radiculopathy, and anxiety. Treatment to date has included medications, physical therapy, occupational therapy, cervical spine fusion, psychotherapy, and imaging studies. A progress note dated August 20, 2014 indicates a chief complaint of neck pain, left shoulder pain, and left thumb pain. The treating physician is requesting a pain management consultation for diagnostic facet blocks, and physiotherapy for the left shoulder.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pain management consultation for diagnostic facet blocks at C5-6 and C6-7: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Chapter 7 - Independent medical examinations and consultations pg 127.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 174, 175. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Neck and upper back - Facet injections.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines note that the effectiveness of cervical facet injections is questionable, but the MTUS Guidelines give no guidance regarding any circumstances it may be reasonable to perform. ODG Guidelines provide significant additional details and support them under very specific circumstances and standards. One of these standards is that the facet injections are not recommended at the levels of a prior fusion. This request is contradictory to this Guideline standard and there are no unusual exceptions to justify an exception to Guidelines. Under these circumstances, the request for facet blocks at C5-6, 6-7 is not supported by Guidelines and is not medically necessary.

Physiotherapy for the left shoulder 2 times a week for 3 weeks: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 9 Shoulder Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98, 99.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines support up to 8-10 sessions of therapy as adequate for most chronic painful musculoskeletal conditions. There is no evidence in the records available to review that this individual has had the recommended amount of physical therapy. At this point in time, the request for physical therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks is supported by Guidelines and is medically necessary.