

Case Number:	CM15-0057391		
Date Assigned:	04/02/2015	Date of Injury:	10/18/2013
Decision Date:	05/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/26/2015

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: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive 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 46-year-old female, who sustained a work/industrial injury on 10/18/13. She has reported initial symptoms of neck pain with radiation down the arms. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical Degenerative Disc Disease (DDD) with right C5 radiculopathy and cubital/carpal tunnel and diffuse tendinitis. Treatments to date included medication, diagnostics, and epidural injection. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) was performed on 1/3/14 reported mild cervical stenosis, spurs on the right that may cause impingement. Electromyogram and/or nerve conduction velocity (EMG/NCV) was performed on 11/13/14 demonstrated mild to moderate denervation on the right at C5-6. X-ray's were performed on 10/21/13 of the right elbow were negative. Currently, the injured worker complains of bilateral neck pain, bilateral hand pain, and severe right elbow pain per detailed report noting the injured worker being evaluated on 2/18/15 by an authorized medical examiner (AME). Treatment plan included MRI of the Cervical Spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the Cervical Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Indications for imaging - MRI (magnetic resonance imaging).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177,182. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck and Upper Back, Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Decision rationale: ACOEM states "Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: Emergence of a red flag, Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery and Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure." ODG states, "Not recommended except for indications list below. Patients who are alert, have never lost consciousness, are not under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, have no distracting injuries, have no cervical tenderness, and have no neurologic findings, do not need imaging." Indications for imaging; MRI (magnetic resonance imaging): Chronic neck pain (= after 3 months conservative treatment), radiographs normal, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Neck pain with radiculopathy if severe or progressive neurologic deficit. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show spondylosis, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show old trauma, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show bone or disc margin destruction. Suspected cervical spine trauma, neck pain, clinical findings suggest ligamentous injury (sprain), radiographs and/or CT "normal." Known cervical spine trauma: equivocal or positive plain films with neurological deficit. Upper back/thoracic spine trauma with neurological deficit. The treating physician has not provided evidence of red flags to meet the criteria above. Additionally, this patient had an MRI in 01/2014; the treating physician has not provided documentation of changes that warrant a repeat MRI at this time. As such the request for MRI of the Cervical Spine is not medically necessary.