

Case Number:	CM15-0058505		
Date Assigned:	04/03/2015	Date of Injury:	03/21/2013
Decision Date:	05/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/27/2015

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: New Jersey

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 male, who sustained an industrial injury on 3/21/13. The injured worker was seen on 2/18/15 with subjective complaints/objective findings of pain; muscle spasms; exhibits restricted motion, pain limits ability to perform exercise/physical therapy treatment and decreased effectiveness of pain medications. The diagnoses have included lumbar spine sprain/strain and radiculopathy. Treatment plan was for 1-2 months(s) rental and purchase of interferential stimulator. The request was for avid interferential unit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Avid interferential unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Interferential Current Stimulation Page(s): 149.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Interferential Current Stimulation (ICS) Page(s): 118-120.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines do not recommend interferential current stimulation (ICS) as an isolated intervention as there is no quality evidence. It may be

considered as an adjunct if used in conjunction with recommended treatments, including return to work, exercise, and medications if these have not shown to provide significant improvements in function and pain relief, and has already been applied by the physician or physical therapist with evidence of effectiveness in the patient. Criteria for consideration would include if the patient's pain is ineffectively controlled due to diminished effectiveness of medications, pain is ineffectively controlled with medications due to side effects, if the patient has a history of substance abuse, if the patient has significant pain from postoperative conditions which limits the ability to perform exercise programs or physical therapy treatments, or if the patient was unresponsive to conservative measures (repositioning, heat/ice, etc.). A one month trial may be appropriate if one of these criteria are met as long as there is documented evidence of functional improvement and less pain and evidence of medication reduction during the trial period. Continuation of the ICS may only be continued if this documentation of effectiveness is provided. Also, a jacket for ICS should only be considered for those patients who cannot apply the pads alone or with the help of another available person, and this be documented. In the case of this worker, there was insufficient documentation provided revealing any ongoing physical medicine, already attempted treatments and effectiveness of each, and other factors which might help justify this request for an interferential unit. There was also lack of specificity in the request, not stating exactly if it was for rental AND purchase or for just rental, although the progress note submitted was suggestive of a request for both. Therefore, the request for an Avid interferential unit will be considered medically unnecessary until the lacking information is provided to help support the request.