

Case Number:	CM15-0084150		
Date Assigned:	05/06/2015	Date of Injury:	04/18/2014
Decision Date:	06/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/02/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/01/2015

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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 45 year old male injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 04/18/2014. The diagnoses included cervical disc herniations with chronic lumbar spine pain and left knee pain. The diagnostics included left knee, lumbar and cervical magnetic resonance imagings. The injured worker had been treated with physical therapy and medications. On 3/23/2015 the treating provider reported lumbar spine pain radiating to the buttocks and is constant and high all the time. The least severe is 7/10 and worse 10/10. The pain was associated with muscle spasms along with positive straight leg raise. The treatment plan included LESI (lumbar epidural steroid injections) and CESI (cervical epidural steroid injections).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral L5-S1 transforaminal LESI: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Steroid injections, page 46.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend ESI as an option for treatment of radicular pain (defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy); However, radiculopathy must be documented on physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or Electrodiagnostic testing, not provided here. Submitted reports have not demonstrated any specific neurological deficits or remarkable diagnostics to support the epidural injections. There is no report of acute new injury, flare-up, progressive neurological deficit, or red-flag conditions to support for pain procedure. There is also no documented failed conservative trial of physical therapy, medications, activity modification, or other treatment modalities to support for the epidural injection. Lumbar epidural injections may be an option for delaying surgical intervention; however, there is not surgery planned or identified pathological lesion noted. Criteria for the epidurals have not been met or established. The Bilateral L5-S1 transforaminal LESI is not medically necessary and appropriate.

C7-T1 interlaminar CESI: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): Chapter 8, Neck and Upper Back Complaints, pages 174-175, and 181, Table 8-8.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend ESI as an option for treatment of radicular pain (defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy); however, radiculopathy must be documented on physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or Electrodiagnostic testing, not clearly established here. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated any neurological deficits or significant findings of radiculopathy collaborated with imaging. The symptom complaints, pain level, clinical findings and pain medication dosing remained unchanged for this chronic injury. The patient continues to treat for chronic symptoms without report of flare-up, new injury, or acute change in clinical findings or progression in functional status. The C7-T1 interlaminar CESI is not medically necessary and appropriate.