

Case Number:	CM15-0085228		
Date Assigned:	05/07/2015	Date of Injury:	12/10/2013
Decision Date:	06/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/23/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/04/2015

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 injured worker is a 62 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on December 10, 2013. He reported pain in his knees. The injured worker was diagnosed as having with a history of left knee arthroscopy and chronic left knee pain. Diagnostic studies to date have included MRI. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, left knee surgery with postoperative physical therapy, and over-the-counter pain medication. On April 1, 2015, the injured worker complains of continued left knee pain. The treating physician notes viscosupplementation was recommended when the injured worker saw the orthopedic surgeon. The physical exam revealed full left knee range of motion, tenderness to palpation over the medial inferior patella region, normal motor strength, and normal deep tendon reflexes. The treatment plan includes viscosupplementation treatment as recommended by orthopedic specialist. The injured worker was temporarily totally disabled.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Viscosupplementation treatment as recommended by orthopedic specialist: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee & Leg.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Knee, Hyaluronic Acid Injections, pages 311-313.

Decision rationale: There is no recent x-ray findings reported. Current symptoms and objective findings are noted in the patella. Published clinical trials comparing injections of visco-supplements with placebo have yielded inconsistent results. ODG states that higher quality and larger trials have generally found lower levels of clinical improvement in pain and function than small and poor quality trials which they conclude that any clinical improvement attributable to visco-supplementation is likely small and not clinically meaningful. They also conclude that evidence is insufficient to demonstrate clinical benefit for the higher molecular weight products. Guidelines recommends Hyaluronic acid injections as an option for osteoarthritis; however, while osteoarthritis of the knee is a recommended indication, there is insufficient evidence for other conditions, including patellofemoral arthritis, chondromalacia patellae, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain). Submitted reports have not demonstrated clear supportive findings for the injection request. The Viscosupplementation treatment as recommended by orthopedic specialist is not medically necessary and appropriate.