

Case Number:	CM14-0122878		
Date Assigned:	09/16/2014	Date of Injury:	06/10/2011
Decision Date:	11/19/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/04/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified Occupational Medicine, has a subspecialty in Internal Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 54-year-old female with a 6/10/11 date of injury. At the time (6/27/14) of request for authorization for Facet Blocks L5-S1, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating to hip and buttocks with numbness) and objective (tenderness over right greater trochanter and lower lumbar spine) findings, current diagnoses (right shoulder impingement syndrome, intermittent right leg radiculopathy, L4-S1 degenerative disc disease, and L5-S1 bilateral foraminal stenosis), and treatment to date (epidural steroid injection, home exercises, physical therapy, and medications (including ongoing treatment with Motrin)). Medical report identifies failure of conservative treatment; and that patient has no real radicular symptoms. There is no documentation of non-radicular facet mediated pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Facet Blocks L5-S1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG -Low Back Chapter chapter

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back, Medial Branch Blocks (MBBs)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM identifies documentation of non-radicular facet mediated pain as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of medial branch block. ODG identifies documentation of low-back pain that is non-radicular and at no more than two levels bilaterally, failure of conservative treatment (including home exercise, PT, and NSAIDs) prior to the procedure for at least 4-6 weeks, and no more than 2 joint levels to be injected in one session, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of medial branch block. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of right shoulder impingement syndrome, intermittent right leg radiculopathy, L4-S1 degenerative disc disease, and L5-S1 bilateral foraminal stenosis. In addition there is documentation of failure of conservative treatment (including home exercise, PT, and NSAIDs) prior to the procedure for at least 4-6 weeks. Furthermore, given documentation of a request for Facet Blocks L5-S1, there is documentation of low back pain at no more than two levels bilaterally; and no more than 2 joint levels to be injected in one session. However, given documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating to hip and buttocks with numbness) findings, despite documentation "that patient has no real radicular symptoms", there is no (clear) documentation of non-radicular facet mediated pain. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Facet Blocks L5-S1 is not medically necessary.