

Case Number:	CM14-0153151		
Date Assigned:	09/23/2014	Date of Injury:	01/14/2011
Decision Date:	10/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/10/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/19/2014

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 in Anesthesiology has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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 50-year-old female with a 1/14/11 date of injury. At the time (8/15/14) of request for authorization for Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection at the L5 Nerve Root, there is documentation of subjective (low back, gluteal, arms, neck, and left shoulder pain radiating to bilateral arms, left calf, left thigh, and right thigh with numbness) and objective (antalgic gait, tenderness over left sciatic notch, and decreased range of motion to bilateral hip and lumbar spine) findings, imaging findings (reported MRI of lumbar spine (8/4/14) revealed left L5 nerve root compression, mild central canal and neural foraminal stenosis; report not available for review), current diagnoses (post-concussion syndrome, chronic pain, and lumbar radiculopathy), and treatment to date (aquatherapy, physical therapy, medications, and facet joint injections). There is no documentation of an imaging report.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection at the L5 Nerve Root: Upheld

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

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, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM Guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. ODG identifies documentation of subjective (pain, numbness, or tingling in a correlating nerve root distribution) and objective (sensory changes, motor changes, or reflex changes (if reflex relevant to the associated level) in a correlating nerve root distribution) radicular findings in each of the requested nerve root distributions, imaging (MRI, CT, myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at each of the requested levels, failure of conservative treatment (activity modification, medications, and physical modalities), and no more than two nerve root levels injected one session; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of lumbar transforaminal epidural steroid injection using fluoroscopy. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of post-concussion syndrome, chronic pain, and lumbar radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of subjective (pain and numbness) and objective (motor changes) radicular findings in the requested nerve root distribution, and failure of conservative treatment (activity modifications, medications and physical modalities), and no more than two nerve root levels injected one session. However, despite documentation of the medical reports' reported imaging findings (MRI of lumbar spine identifying left L5 nerve root compression, mild central canal and neural foraminal stenosis), there is no documentation of an imaging report. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection at the L5 Nerve Root is not medically necessary.