

Case Number:	CM14-0163274		
Date Assigned:	10/08/2014	Date of Injury:	01/13/2014
Decision Date:	11/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/03/2014

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 Occupational 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:

Patient is a 49 year-old female with date of injury 01/13/2014. The medical document associated with the request for authorization, a primary treating physician's progress report, dated 09/08/2014, lists subjective complaints as pain in the low back with radicular symptoms down the right lower extremity. X-ray and MRI of the lumbar spine were notable for mild degenerative disc disease. Objective findings: Examination of the lumbar spine revealed paraspinal spasm on the right side. Trigger points were detected at the right sciatic notch, right iliac crest, and lumbar paraspinals. Range of motion was reduced by 25%. Sensory exam, motor exam, and reflexes were normal. Diagnosis: Lumbosacral strain, right leg pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI lumbar spine without contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303.

Decision rationale: The MTUS states that unequivocal objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging in

patients who do not respond to treatment and who would consider surgery an option. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction should be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Indiscriminant imaging will result in false-positive findings, such as disk bulges, that are not the source of painful symptoms and do not warrant surgery. The medical record fails to document sufficient findings indicative of nerve root compromise which would warrant an MRI of the lumbar spine. The physical exam reveals no evidence of radiculopathy, and it is reported that the patient had a lumbar MRI 3 months prior for which no results are available in the medical record. MRI lumbar spine without contrast is not medically necessary.