

Case Number:	CM14-0163367		
Date Assigned:	10/08/2014	Date of Injury:	06/12/2013
Decision Date:	11/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/24/2014
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 Orthopedic Surgery 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:

The claimant was a 36 year old female who sustained an injury to the upper extremities on 06/12/13. The clinical records provided for review included the 09/10/14 progress report documenting that the claimant had complaints of bilateral wrist numbness and tingling and "dropping objects". Physical examination findings revealed a positive Tinel's and Phalen's testing, right greater than left, of the bilateral upper extremities at the wrist. There were also subjective complaints of diminished sensation in the median nerve distribution bilaterally. Records indicate that the claimant has been treated with conservative measures since injury. The documentation of the 07/17/14 bilateral upper extremity ultrasound of the claimant's wrists showed bilateral median nerve enlargement, right greater than left, indicative of carpal tunnel syndrome. It states that the claimant had previously undergone electrodiagnostic studies on 10/14/13 that showed mild carpal tunnel syndrome, however, the formal report was not provided for this review. This request is for a stage carpal tunnel release procedure.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right carpal tunnel release (followed by left): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 270.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 265,270.

Decision rationale: California ACOEM Guidelines do not support the request for a right carpal tunnel release then followed by a left carpal tunnel release. The medical records document the results of an ultrasound study of the wrists but there is no documentation of a formal report of the claimant's electrodiagnostic study findings. Without formal documentation of compressive pathology on examination that correlates with the results of electrodiagnostic studies, the claimant would fail to meet the ACOEM Guideline criteria for a carpal tunnel release which clearly indicates the diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome must be established, both on physical examination and electrodiagnostic testing. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.

Left carpal tunnel release: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 270.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 265,270.

Decision rationale: California ACOEM Guidelines also would not support a left carpal tunnel release procedure. The medical records document the results of an ultrasound study of the wrists but there is no documentation of a formal report of the claimant's electrodiagnostic study findings. Without formal documentation of compressive pathology on examination that correlates with the results of electrodiagnostic studies, the claimant would fail to meet the ACOEM Guideline criteria for a carpal tunnel release which clearly indicates the diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome must be established, both on physical examination and electrodiagnostic testing. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.