

Case Number:	CM14-0167921		
Date Assigned:	10/15/2014	Date of Injury:	09/14/1994
Decision Date:	11/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/04/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/13/2014

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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 53-year-old female with a 9/14/94 date of injury. At the time (8/14/14) of request for authorization for MRI of the lumbar spine, there is documentation of subjective (increased back pain associated with left leg symptom) and objective (tenderness over the soft tissues on both sides of the lumbar spine and right sacroiliac joint and equivocal left straight leg raising test) findings, imaging findings (reported MRI of the lumbar spine (2008) revealed T12- L1 and L3 to S1 disk protrusions and L4-L5 and L5-S1 nerve root compression; report not available for review), current diagnoses (chronic back pain), and treatment to date (medications and home exercise program). Medical report identifies that the patient has worsening condition and increased radicular symptoms in the left leg.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the lumbar spine: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303-304. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guidelines: Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Minnesota Rules, 5221.6100 Parameters for Medical Imaging

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentation of red flag diagnoses where plain film radiographs are negative; objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination, failure of conservative treatment, and who are considered for surgery, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of MRI. OGD identifies documentation of a diagnosis/condition (with supportive subjective/objective findings) for which a repeat study is indicated (such as: To diagnose a suspected fracture or suspected dislocation, to monitor a therapy or treatment which is known to result in a change in imaging findings and imaging of these changes are necessary to determine the efficacy of the therapy or treatment (repeat imaging is not appropriate solely to determine the efficacy of physical therapy or chiropractic treatment), to follow up a surgical procedure, to diagnose a change in the patient's condition marked by new or altered physical findings) as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a repeat MRI. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of a diagnosis of chronic back pain. In addition, there is documentation of a 2008 MRI of lumbar spine. Furthermore, given documentation of subjective (increased back pain associated with left leg symptom) and objective (tenderness over the soft tissues on both sides of the lumbar spine and right sacroiliac joint and equivocal left straight leg raising test) findings, and that the patient has worsening condition and increased radicular symptoms in the left leg, there is documentation of diagnosis/condition (with supportive subjective/objective findings) for which a repeat study is indicated (to diagnose a change in the patient's condition marked by new or altered physical findings). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for MRI of the lumbar spine is medically necessary.