

Case Number:	CM14-0168933		
Date Assigned:	10/17/2014	Date of Injury:	09/13/2013
Decision Date:	11/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/17/2014
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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in Georgia. 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 is a 67 year old male presenting with chronic pain following a work related injury on 09/13/2013. The claimant returned to work on full duty. The claimant reported that his symptoms were aggravated. The pain radiated to the upper buttocks to left hip. The pain was associated with left leg numbness. The physical exam showed lumbar spine and lower extremities, slight limp favoring (L); decreased sensation over the left L3 dermatomes, flexion 60 degrees, and pain with extension, lateral bending. MRI of the lumbar spine showed disc dehydration at all levels, 2 mm mild annular diffuse disc bulges at L4-5, L3-4 resulting in mild bilateral neuroforaminal encroachment. The enrollee's medications included Diazepam and Vicodin ES 7.5-300mg. The claimant was diagnosed with left L3 radiculopathy, L3-4, L4-5 mild foraminal stenosis secondary to disc bulge, lumbar spondylosis with multilevel disc degeneration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Facet blocks/MBB L5-S1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back, Lumbar Facet Joint Injections

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Complaints, Treatment Consideration

Decision rationale: Facet blocks/MBB L5-S1 is not medically necessary. The Occupation medicine practice guidelines criteria for use of diagnostic facet (medial branch) blocks require: that the clinical presentation be consistent with facet pain; Treatment is also limited to patients with cervical pain that is non-radicular and had no more than 2 levels bilaterally; documentation of failed conservative therapy including home exercise physical therapy and NSAID is required at least 4-6 weeks prior to the diagnostic facet block; no more than 2 facet joint levels are injected at one session; recommended by them of no more than 0.5 cc of injectate was given to each joint; no pain medication from home should be taken for at least 4 hours prior to the diagnostic block and for 4-6 hours afterward; opioid should not be given as a sedative during the procedure; the use of IV sedation (including other agents such as modafinil) may interfere with the result of the diagnostic block, and should only be given in cases of extreme anxiety; the patient should document pain relief with the management such as VAS scale, emphasizing the importance of recording the maximum pain relief and maximum duration of pain. The patient should also keep medication use and activity level to support subjective reports of better pain control; diagnostic blocks should not be performed in patients in whom surgical procedures anticipated; diagnostic facet block should not be performed patients who have had a previous fusion procedure at the plan injection level. There is no documentation that the enrollee has tried and failed at least 4-6 weeks of conservative therapy including physical therapy and NSAIDs; therefore the requested procedure is not medically necessary.