

Case Number:	CM14-0184356		
Date Assigned:	11/12/2014	Date of Injury:	04/22/2010
Decision Date:	12/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/05/2014

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 58 year-old male with date of injury 04/22/2010. The medical document associated with the request for authorization, a primary treating physician's progress report, dated 09/10/2014, lists subjective findings as pain in the neck and low back. Patient underwent an MRI of the lumbar spine in 2011 that was notable for degenerative changes to the lumbar vertebrae. Objective findings: Examination of the lumbar spine revealed tenderness at the L4-L5 on deep palpation as well as bilateral posterior, superior iliac crest. Range of motion was restricted and painful. Sensation to light touch and pinprick was intact in all dermatomes in the bilateral lower extremities. Straight raise test caused pain at 45 degrees from sitting position. Heel to toe ambulation was painful. Diagnosis: 1. Cervical strain 2. Lumbar strain 3. Inguinal strain bilaterally 4. History of kidney failure 5. History of leukemia.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI Lumbar: 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. In discriminant 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. MRI Lumbar is not medically necessary.