

Case Number:	CM14-0215831		
Date Assigned:	01/28/2015	Date of Injury:	10/10/2013
Decision Date:	02/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/16/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/23/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Oriental Medicine

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 63 y/o female patient with pain complains of her neck, left elbow-wrist-thumb amongst others after her involvement in a job related injury. Diagnoses included sprain/strain of cervical spine, left elbow-wrist and left thumb tendon rupture. Previous treatments included: trigger point injections, chiropractic-physical therapy, and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for an acupuncture trial x12 was made by the primary care physician. The requested care was modified on 12-16-14 by the UR reviewer to approve four sessions and non-certifying eight sessions. The reviewer rationale was acupuncture x4 is supported by the guidelines as medically and necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 Acupuncture sessions, 2 x 6 weeks, for the left thumb: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care (trigger point injections, chiropractic, physical therapy, work modifications and self-care) an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS. The guidelines note that the amount to produce functional improvement is 3-6 treatments. The same guidelines could support additional care based on the functional improvement(s) obtained with the trial. As the PTP requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore not supported for medical necessity.

12 Acupuncture sessions, 2 x 6 weeks, for the left elbow: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care (trigger point injections, chiropractic, physical therapy, work modifications and self-care) an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS. The guidelines note that the amount to produce functional improvement is 3-6 treatments. The same guidelines could support additional care based on the functional improvement(s) obtained with the trial. As the PTP requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore not supported for medical necessity.

12 Acupuncture sessions, 2 x 6 weeks, for the left wrist: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care (trigger point injections, chiropractic, physical therapy, work modifications and self-care) an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS. The guidelines note that the amount to produce functional improvement is 3-6 treatments. The same guidelines could support additional care based on the functional improvement(s) obtained with the trial. As the PTP requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore not supported for medical necessity.

12 visits acupuncture, 2x6 weeks, for cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care (trigger point injections, chiropractic, physical therapy, work modifications and self-care) an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS. The guidelines note that the amount to produce functional improvement is 3-6 treatments. The same guidelines could support additional care based on the functional improvement(s) obtained with the trial. As the PTP requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore not supported for medical necessity.