

Case Number:	CM15-0100912		
Date Assigned:	06/03/2015	Date of Injury:	11/30/2009
Decision Date:	07/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/26/2015

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: Chiropractor, 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:

The injured worker is a 56 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/30/2009. She reported injury from lifting heavy linen bags. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical strain with right radicular symptoms and secondary insomnia and depression. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Treatment to date has included right shoulder surgery x2, cervical epidural steroid injection, physical therapy, cognitive behavior therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 5/1/2015, the injured worker complains of neck and upper back pain, rated 8/10 that improves with medications. The injured worker also notes bilateral shoulder pain and bilateral forearm and wrist pain with intermittent numbness and tingling in both hands. Physical examination showed cervical paraspinal muscle spasm and tenderness. The treating physician is requesting 8 sessions of acupuncture to the cervical spine and upper back.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2 x week x 4 weeks cervical/upper back: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 8 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Medical records discuss improvement but not in a specific and verifiable manner consistent with the definition of functional improvement as stated in guidelines. The documentation fails to provide baseline of activities of daily living and examples of improvement in activities of daily living as result of acupuncture. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 2x4 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.