

Case Number:	CM15-0015589		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	07/27/2010
Decision Date:	03/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/09/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/27/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 27 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on July 27, 2010. The diagnoses have included bilateral knee internal derangement, lumbosacral sprain with radiculopathy, trochanteric bursitis, impingement syndrome and bicipital tendonitis, left wrist inflammation and chronic pain syndrome. A progress note dated December 18, 2014 provides the injured worker complains of low back and bilateral knee pain. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was done previously. Physical exam reveals tenderness of the thoracic and lumbar back and facet loading. She has had injection in the left knee previously and is having increased right knee pain now. Plan is for Cortisone injection of the knee. On January 9, 2015 utilization review non-certified a request for Cortisone steroid injection, right knee. The Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) and Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) were utilized in the determination. Application for independent medical review (IMR) is dated January 27, 2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cortisone steroid injection, right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 339. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Corticosteroid injections ODG <http://www.odg-twc.com/index.html>

Decision rationale: According to ODG guidelines, Corticosteroid injections “recommended for short-term use only. Intra-articular corticosteroid injection results in clinically and statistically significant reduction in osteoarthritic knee pain 1 week after injection. The beneficial effect could last for 3 to 4 weeks, but is unlikely to continue beyond that.” Criteria for Intra-articular glucocorticosteroid injections: Documented symptomatic severe osteoarthritis of the knee according to American College of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria, which requires knee pain and at least 5 of the following:(1) Bony enlargement;(2) Bony tenderness;(3) Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion;(4) Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) less than 40 mm/hr;(5) Less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness;(6) No palpable warmth of synovium;(7) Over 50 years of age;(8) Rheumatoid factor less than 1:40 titer (agglutination method);(9) Synovial fluid signs (clear fluid of normal viscosity and WBC less than 2000/mm³);-Not controlled adequately by recommended conservative treatments (exercise, NSAIDs or acetaminophen);-Pain interferes with functional activities (e.g., ambulation, prolonged standing) and not attributed to other forms of joint disease;-Intended for short-term control of symptoms to resume conservative medical management or delay TKA;-Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance;-Absence of synovitis, presence of effusion preferred (not required);-Aspiration of effusions preferred (not required);-Only one injection should be scheduled to start, rather than a series of three;-A second injection is not recommended if the first has resulted in complete resolution of symptoms, or if there has been no response;-With several weeks of temporary, partial resolution of symptoms, and then worsening pain and function, a repeat steroid injection may be an option;The number of injections should be limited to three. There is no documentation of knee osteoarthritis, bone enlargement, bone tenderness, crepitus, age over 50 years, ESR more than 30 minutes or any other criteria for steroid injection. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.