

Case Number:	CM15-0015701		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	07/25/1995
Decision Date:	03/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/02/2015
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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 injured worker is a 58 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 7/25/95 resulting in left knee injury. He experiences achiness, stiffness and pain in the left knee. Medication usage was not mentioned. Diagnoses include left knee with torn meniscus; left knee diagnostic and operative arthroscopic with revision surgery on 9/9/11 with prior history of left knee surgery; status post synvisc injection 2/14/ and 8/14. Progress note dated 10/14/14 indicates that the injured worker had 2 prior injections with 40% improvement and still feeling the positive effects 2 months later. He is a good candidate to receive these injections every 6-12 months as they provide lasting relief. On 1/2/15 Utilization Review non-certified the request for synvisc injection every 6-12 months (left knee) citing MTUS: Chronic pain Medical Treatment Guidelines; ACOEM and ODG: -TWC: Knee and Leg Procedure Summary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Synvisc Injections every 6 - 12 months (left knee): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) - Treatment in Workers Compensation (TWC), Knee and Leg Procedures Summary last updated 10/27/2014, Hylan, Criteria for Hyaluronic Acid Injections

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official disability guidelines Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) chapter, under Hyaluronic acid injections

Decision rationale: The patient, a 59-year-old male with an injury date of 07/25/95, presents for orthopedic evaluation in regards to his left knee. The request is for SYNVISIC INJECTIONS EVERY 6-12 MONTHS (LEFT KNEE). The RFA is not provided. Patient is status-post left knee arthroscopy on 09/09/11. Patient's diagnosis included pain in joint, lower leg and unilateral primary osteoarthritis, unspecified knee. The patient is retired. ODG guidelines, Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) chapter, under Hyaluronic acid injections, state the following:

"Recommended as a possible option for severe osteoarthritis for patients who have not responded adequately to recommended conservative treatments (exercise, NSAIDs or acetaminophen), to potentially delay total knee replacement, but in recent quality studies the magnitude of improvement appears modest at best. See Recent research below. While osteoarthritis of the knee is a recommended indication, there is insufficient evidence for other conditions, including patellofemoral arthritis, chondromalacia patellae, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain). Hyaluronic acids are naturally occurring substances in the body's connective tissues that cushion and lubricate the joints. Intra-articular injection of hyaluronic acid can decrease symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knee; there are significant improvements in pain and functional outcomes with few adverse events." Repeat injections are recommended if there is symptomatic improvement lasting 6 months or more. In this case, the patient suffers from chronic knee pain and per the progress report dated 10/14/14, the patient's most recent Synvisc injection was on 08/19/14 with 40% symptomatic improvement. Repeat injections are recommended if there is symptomatic improvement lasting 6 months or more. The requested additional Synvisc injections would appear reasonable; however, the request is for multiple injection without a time-frame. Pain reduction and functional improvements must be demonstrated following each injection for a repeat injection to be considered. The request IS NOT medically necessary.