

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0114260		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/22/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/27/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/22/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/18/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/12/2015

### 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: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina  
Certification(s)/Specialty: Plastic Surgery

### 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 47 year old woman sustained an industrial injury on 11/27/2014. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Evaluations include undated left hand x-rays. Diagnoses include trigger finger. Treatment has included oral medications and occupational therapy. Physician notes dated 5/7/2015 show complaints of pain and locking of the right finger rated 5-10/10. Recommendations include surgical intervention with post-operative occupational therapy and pre-operative laboratory testing.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Assistant surgeon:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American association of orthopaedic surgeons.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Low back, surgical assistant. Chapter: Book Chapter, Basic Surgical Technique and Postoperative Care. David L. Cannon Campbell's Operative Orthopaedics, Page Number: Chapter 64, 3200-3220.

**Decision rationale:** The patient is a 47 year old female who was certified for trigger finger release. An assistant surgeon was requested. As a trigger finger release should be considered a relatively non-complex procedure and that adequate justification had not been documented for the use of an assistant, this should not be considered medically necessary. From ODG, a surgical assistant is recommended as an option in more complex surgeries. Additionally, from the reference with respect to hand surgery, the role of the assistant surgeon is defined: 'Seated opposite the surgeon, the assistant should view the operative field from 8 to 10 cm higher than the surgeon to allow a clear line of vision without having to bend forward and obstruct the surgeon's view. Although mechanical hand holders are available, they are not as good as a motivated and well-trained assistant. It is especially helpful for the assistant to be familiar with each procedure. Usually, the primary duty of the assistant is to hold the patient's hand stable, secure, and motionless, retracting the fingers to provide the surgeon with the best access to the operative field.' Thus, the role and importance of an assistant surgeon is well-defined; however, as a trigger finger is a relatively non-complex procedure and additional justification had not been provided, it is not medically necessary.

**Post operative Clindamycin 300mg #12:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation A Prospective Trial on the Use of Antibiotics in Hand Surgery. Aydin, Nihal; Uraloglu, Muhammed; Burhanoglu, Asu Deniz Yilmaz; Sensöz, Ömer *Less Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery* 126(5): 1617-1623, November 2010.

**Decision rationale:** The patient is a 47 year old female who was certified for trigger finger release. Post-operative antibiotic medications were requested. In general, the routine use of post-operative antibiotics is not supported by peer-reviewed literature in the type of clean cases that includes a trigger finger release. From the above reference, 'A Prospective Trial on the Use of Antibiotics in Hand Surgery': With respect to hand surgery procedures: 'This study does not support the notion that the use of perioperative antibiotics over placebo in the types of wounds considered provides additional benefit, provided that the wound was managed appropriately with thorough surgical irrigation and debridement. We suggest that antibiotics should not be used routinely in hand surgery interventions and should be reserved for high-risk patients (e.g., those who are immunosuppressed) or for a specific infection identified by culture.' This is also documented in the rationale provided in the UR review. Therefore, as the patient has not been documented to be high-risk, postoperative antibiotics are not medically necessary.