

Case Number:	CM15-0122022		
Date Assigned:	07/06/2015	Date of Injury:	12/19/2013
Decision Date:	08/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/24/2015

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 44 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 12/19/13. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications and acupuncture, which was reported to provide pain relief. Diagnostic studies are not addressed. Current complaints include lower back pain, current diagnoses include chronic lumbar sprain and strain with lower lumbar disc protrusion, as well as cervical strain and disc protrusions. In a progress note dated 05/14/15, the treating provider reports the plan of care as additional acupuncture, as well as therapeutic exercises. She did a previous trial of acupuncture did offer significant pain relief.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture, Lower Back pain, 2 times wkly for 4 wks, 8 sessions: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to evidenced based guidelines, further acupuncture after an initial trial is medically necessary based on functional improvement. Functional improvement is defined as a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living, a reduction in work restrictions, or a reduction of dependency on continued medical treatments or medications. The claimant has had prior acupuncture trial with subjective benefits of pain relief. However, the provider fails to document objective functional improvement associated with acupuncture treatment. Therefore, further acupuncture is not medically necessary.