

Case Number:	CM15-0122657		
Date Assigned:	07/06/2015	Date of Injury:	05/01/2012
Decision Date:	07/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/25/2015

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, Indiana, New York
Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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:

This 36 year old man sustained an industrial injury on 5/1/2012. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Evaluations include left ankle and foot x-rays dated 7/1/2014 and an undated left foot and ankle MRI. Diagnoses include bimalleolar left ankle fracture with sprain of the anterior talofibular ligament and calcaneofibular ligament. Treatment has included oral medications, left foot peroneal injection, and two sural nerve blocks. Physician notes dated 6/11/2015 show left ankle pain. Recommendations include possible surgical intervention, alcohol injections, and follow up in four weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

3 Alcohol sclerosing injections: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 367-377.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Ankle and foot section, Alcohol sclerosing injections.

Decision rationale: Pursuant to the Official Disability Guidelines, three alcohol sclerosing injections are not medically necessary. Alcohol injections are recommended according to the criteria for alcohol injections of Morton's neuroma (see ODG) for specifics. The criteria include six months of conservative therapy have been attempted and documented as having failed: change in shoe types resulting in neuroma like symptoms; change or limitation and activities and use of metatarsal pads to reduce pressure on the nerve by spreading the metatarsals. Injections are expected to be performed according to the following protocol: ultrasound imaging guidance (depends upon providers access to and comfort with ultrasound); if there is a clinically significant positive response reported and documented after two injections, up to three additional at 14 day intervals may be indicated. If however, two consecutive injections fail to achieve continued and clinically significant improvement, subsequent injections would not be necessary. In this case, the injured worker's working diagnosis is left sural neuropathy stable. The date of injury is May 1, 2012. According to a progress note dated June 8, 2015, the injured worker has pain in the outer aspect of the left ankle. Objectively, there are no open lesions, no erythema, no bruising. Treatment plan is to administer alcohol sclerosing injections to the sural nerve. The treating provider requested three alcohol sclerosing injections. The injections are not for treatment of Morton's neuroma. The guidelines do not include alcohol sclerosing injections for sural neuropathy. Consequently, absent guideline recommendations for alcohol sclerosis injections for sural neuropathy, three alcohol sclerosing injections are not medically necessary.