

Case Number:	CM15-0024926		
Date Assigned:	02/17/2015	Date of Injury:	06/29/2014
Decision Date:	04/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/09/2015

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 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/29/2014. He has reported sudden back pain associated with numbness to left arm and left leg. The diagnoses have included cervical disc herniation without myelopathy, thoracic disc displacement without myelopathy, lumbar sprain, partial rotator cuff tear, carpal sprain, left ankle sprain and sleep disorder. He is status post left shoulder rotator cuff repair in 2007, and right rotator cuff repair 2012. Treatment to date has included Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) and twelve (12) acupuncture treatments, and epidural injection. Currently, the IW complains of pain in cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine, left ankle and foot, left shoulder, left wrist and hand and difficulty sleeping due to pain. On 12/29/14, physical examination documented multiple significant tenderness points, positive cervical axial compression test bilaterally for neurological compromise, Kemp's and straight leg were positive bilaterally, Speeds test was positive on left the shoulder, and positive Finklestein's test on the left wrist. The plan of care included six additional sessions of acupuncture. On 1/13/2015 Utilization Review non-certified additional six (6) sessions of acupuncture to cervical/thoracic/lumbar spine, noting the documentation lack evidence to support functional improvements with prior treatment. The MTUS Guidelines were cited. On 2/9/2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of additional six (6) sessions of acupuncture to cervical/thoracic/lumbar spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Additional 6 sessions of acupuncture to cervical /Thoracic/Lumbar Spine: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The Acupuncture Medical Treatment Guidelines states that acupuncture may be extended if there is documentation of functional improvement. Records indicate that the patient had acupuncture in the past. The provider reported that the patient decreased ibuprofen 800 mg use from three times a day to 2 times a day. According to the doctor's first report dated 8/7/2014, ibuprofen was discontinued due to insulin use and diabetes. According to the progress report dated 11/26/2014, the patient completed 6 acupuncture sessions and the patient was schedule to start his authorized acupuncture therapy on 12/01/2014. Ibuprofen was discontinued before the acupuncture sessions. Therefore, the provider's request for additional 6 acupuncture sessions to the cervical / thoracic/ lumbar spine is not medically necessary. There was not documentation of functional improvement from prior acupuncture sessions.