

Case Number:	CM15-0065842		
Date Assigned:	04/13/2015	Date of Injury:	05/05/2014
Decision Date:	05/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/31/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/07/2015

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:

The injured worker is a 26-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 05/05/2014. She reported immediate sharp pain to the back, neck, bilateral wrists, right hip, and right ankle after she slipped and fell onto a hard floor. The injured worker was diagnosed as having thoracic spine and lumbar spine sprain/strain and lumbar spine myospasms. Treatment to date has included home exercise program, medication regimen, magnetic resonance imaging of the lumbar spine, physical therapy, and laboratory studies. In a progress note dated 03/19/2015 the treating physician reports complaints of severe pain to the thoracic spine and the lumbar spine along with sciatic pain with a pain increase with activities and a decrease in pain with medications. The treating physician also notes tenderness at the thoracolumbar paravertebral muscles. The treating physician requested an interferential unit and urine toxicology, but the documentation provided did not indicate the specific reason for the requested treatments.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

IF (interferential) Unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrotherapy; Interferential Current Stimulation (ICS) Page(s): 114-116; 118-119.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy, pages 115-118.

Decision rationale: The MTUS guidelines recommend a one-month rental trial of TENS unit to be appropriate to permit the physician and provider licensed to provide physical therapy to study the effects and benefits, and it should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) as to how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function; however, there are no documented failed trial of TENS unit or functional improvement such as increased ADLs, decreased medication dosage, increased pain relief or improved functional status derived from any transcutaneous electrotherapy to warrant an interferential unit for home use for this chronic injury. Additionally, IF unit may be used in conjunction to a functional restoration process with return to work and exercises not demonstrated here. The IF (interferential) Unit is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Urine Toxicology: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Drug testing; Opioids, steps to avoid misuse/addiction Page(s): 43, 94-95.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Drug Testing, page 43.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Guidelines, urine drug screening is recommended as an option before a therapeutic trial of opioids and for on-going management to differentiate issues of abuse, addiction, misuse, or poor pain control; none of which apply to this patient who has been prescribed long-term opioid this chronic injury. Presented medical reports from the provider have unchanged chronic severe pain symptoms with unchanged clinical findings of restricted range and tenderness without acute new deficits or red-flag condition changes. Treatment plan remains unchanged with continued medication refills without change in dosing or prescription for chronic pain. There is no report of aberrant behaviors, illicit drug use, and report of acute injury or change in clinical findings or risk factors to support frequent UDS. Documented abuse, misuse, poor pain control, history of unexpected positive results for a non-prescribed scheduled drug or illicit drug or history of negative results for prescribed medications may warrant UDS and place the patient in a higher risk level; however, none are provided. The Urine Toxicology is not medically necessary and appropriate.