

Case Number:	CM15-0065952		
Date Assigned:	04/13/2015	Date of Injury:	07/30/2009
Decision Date:	05/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/13/2015
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 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial/work injury on 7/30/09. He reported initial complaints of right shoulder, elbow, bilateral forearm, wrist, and finger pain along with decreased grip strength. The injured worker was diagnosed as having subluxation of shoulder, cervicobrachial syndrome, lateral epicondylitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, acquired trigger finger, and frozen shoulder. Treatment to date has included medication, physical therapy, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit, and right shoulder injection. MRI results were reported on 9/19/14. Electromyography and nerve conduction velocity test (EMG/NCV) was performed on 1/7/13. Currently, the injured worker complains of right shoulder and wrist pain. Per the primary physician's progress report (PR-2) on 3/9/15, there was crepitus in both shoulders, tenderness to palpation in the biceps tendon and lateral epicondyle. Trigger points were palpated in the upper trapezius, lower trapezius, and splenius capitis bilaterally. Pain limits range of motion of the right shoulder. Motor strength was 4-/5 to elbow flexion and extension. There was paresthesias to light touch in the digits 1-5 bilaterally. Adson's, Hawkin's, Speed's, Tinel's, were all positive, bilaterally. The requested treatments include MRI of the right elbow without contrast.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the right elbow without contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Page(s): 33-34. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Elbow Chapter, MRI.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 10 Elbow Disorders (Revised 2007) Page(s): Chapter Elbow Disorder, Special Studies and Diagnostic, pages 601-602.

Decision rationale: Criteria for ordering imaging studies such include Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist; however, review of submitted medical reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication for the MRI without acute trauma, new injury, or progressive change for this 2009 injury. When the neurologic examination is less clear, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. The MRI of the right elbow without contrast is not medically necessary and appropriate.