

Case Number:	CM15-0068062		
Date Assigned:	04/15/2015	Date of Injury:	10/18/2011
Decision Date:	05/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/03/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/09/2015

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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 59 year old male injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 10/18/2011. The diagnoses included chronic lumbar compression fracture. The diagnostics included lumbar magnetic resonance imaging. The injured worker had been treated with medications, physical therapy and surgery. On 3/20/2015, the treating provider reported ongoing central low back pain 5/10 with medications and 8 to 9/10 without medications radiating to the shins with pins and needles sensation. There is tenderness of the lumbar spine and sacroiliac joints. The treatment plan included facet block injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One (1) facet block injection at bilateral L4-L5 levels: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300, 309. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back Chapter, Facet Joint Pain, Signs & Symptoms, Facet Joint Diagnostic Blocks (Injections), Facet Joint Medial Branch Blocks (Therapeutic).

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for facet injections, CA MTUS and ACOEM state that invasive techniques are of questionable merit. ODG states that suggested indicators of pain related to facet joint pathology include tenderness to palpation in the paravertebral area, a normal sensory examination, and absence of radicular findings. They also recommend the use of medial branch blocks over intraarticular facet joint injections as, although it is suggested that MBBs and intra-articular blocks appear to provide comparable diagnostic information, the results of placebo-controlled trials of neurotomy found better predictive effect with diagnostic MBBs. In addition, the same nerves are tested with the MBB as are treated with the neurotomy. Within the documentation available for review, there are no recent physical examination findings supporting a diagnosis of facet arthropathy. Additionally, it appears the patient has active symptoms of radiculopathy. Guidelines do not support the use of facet injections in patients with active radiculopathy. Furthermore, there is no clear rationale for facet injections rather than the medial branch blocks recommended by the guidelines. In light of the above issues, the currently requested facet injections are not medically necessary.