

Case Number:	CM15-0069801		
Date Assigned:	04/17/2015	Date of Injury:	07/20/2001
Decision Date:	05/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/23/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/13/2015

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 42-year-old female injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 07/20/2001. The diagnoses included sprain/strain of the neck and brachial neuritis. The diagnostics included cervical magnetic resonance imaging. The injured worker had been treated with medications. On 3/4/2015, the treating provider reported the cervical pain radiated to the upper back into the shoulders rated 5/10 at the least and 10/10 at the worst with difficulty sleeping. Also mentioned were headaches with numbness and tingling to the right fingers. On exam, there was tenderness in the cervical muscles and reduced range of motion. The treatment plan included Acupuncture.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 1 time a week for 8 weeks neck: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 175, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 8 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. There is lack of evidence that prior acupuncture care was of any functional benefit. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. ODG and ACOEM guidelines do not recommend acupuncture for neck pain. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 1X8 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.