

Case Number:	CM15-0071480		
Date Assigned:	04/21/2015	Date of Injury:	05/19/2014
Decision Date:	05/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/07/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/15/2015

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 injured worker is a 45 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on May 19, 2014. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical disc degeneration, neck pain, and myofascial tender points. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, cervical spine MRI, and medication. Currently, the injured worker complains of right neck and shoulder pain, and arm(s) pain. The Primary Treating Physician's report dated April 1, 2015, noted the injured worker had been seen by for pain management on March 31, 2015, and was recommended to undergo a cervical epidural steroid injection (ESI) at C7-T1 level, and if no relief, then may consider a neurosurgical evaluation. The Physician concurred with the pain management recommendation and requested authorization for a cervical epidural steroid injection (ESI) at C7-T1. The pain management evaluation dated March 31, 2015, noted the injured worker's medications as Flexeril and Norco. A cervical spine MRI was noted to show multilevel degenerative disc disease, most pronounced at C5-C6 where there was moderate spinal canal stenosis and severe bilateral foraminal narrowing. The Physician recommended a cervical epidural steroid injection (ESI) trial at C7-T1 to see if there was any benefit, and if no relief may consider a neurosurgical evaluation.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cervical epidural steroid injection C7-T1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): Table 8-2, 8-3, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections (ESIs) Page(s): 46-47.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for cervical epidural steroid injection, California MTUS cites that ESI is recommended as an option for treatment of radicular pain (defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy), and radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. Within the documentation available for review, the patient had normal upper extremity sensory exam and no finding supporting a diagnosis of radiculopathy in a physical exam performed on 4/8/2015. Furthermore, a cervical MRI on 3/12/2015 showed severe bilateral foraminal narrowing and moderate spinal stenosis at C5-C6, but does not support radiculopathy at the proposed level of the epidural steroid injection. There is no recent EMG nerve conduction study to support the diagnosis of radiculopathy either. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested cervical epidural steroid injection is not medically necessary.