

Case Number:	CM15-0071838		
Date Assigned:	04/22/2015	Date of Injury:	12/18/2003
Decision Date:	05/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/27/2015
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: Arizona, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 41 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 12/18/03. She reported pain in her neck, low back and knees. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic right knee strain, left knee strain and status post left knee arthroscopies. Treatment to date has included a knee brace and pain medications. As of the PR2 dated 3/2/15, the injured worker reports 3/10 bilateral knee pain. The treating physician noted mild swelling and moderate tenderness in the left knee and crepitation and tenderness in the right knee. The treatment plan includes a weight loss program, oral pain medications and viscosupplementation injections. The treating physician requested viscosupplementation injection to the knees.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Visco supplementation injections to the knees: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee & Leg, Hyaluronic acid injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG- knee chapter and pg 34.

Decision rationale: According to the guidelines: Criteria for Hyaluronic acid injections: Patients experience significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis but have not responded adequately to recommended conservative non-pharmacologic (e.g., exercise) and pharmacologic treatments or are intolerant of these therapies (e.g., gastrointestinal problems related to anti-inflammatory medications), after at least 3 months; Documented symptomatic severe osteoarthritis of the knee according to American College of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria, which requires knee pain and at least 5 of the following: (1) Bony enlargement; (2) Bony tenderness; (3) Crepitus (noisy, grating sound) on active motion; (4) Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) less than 40 mm/hr; (5) Less than 30 minutes of morning stiffness; (6) No palpable warmth of synovium; (7) Over 50 years of age; (8) Rheumatoid factor less than 1:40 titer (agglutination method); (9) Synovial fluid signs (clear fluid of normal viscosity and WBC less than 2000/mm³); Pain interferes with functional activities (e.g., ambulation, prolonged standing) and not attributed to other forms of joint disease; Failure to adequately respond to aspiration and injection of intra-articular steroids; Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance; In this case, the claimant did not have the criteria for arthritis above. In addition, the claimant was diagnosed with mild chondromalacia and knee strain. There is insufficient evidence to indicate the viscosupplementation will provide lasting benefit for the claimant's condition. The request is not medically necessary.