

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0073375		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/23/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/24/1992
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/20/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/18/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/17/2015

### 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: New Jersey, Alabama, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 injured worker is a 47 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on June 24, 1992. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervicalgia and cervical intervertebral disc without myelopathy. Treatment and diagnostic studies to date have included trigger point injections, surgeries, therapy and medication. A progress note dated February 6, 2015 provides the injured worker complains of neck and shoulder pain that radiates down the arms. Right shoulder pain is rated 9/10, left shoulder is 5/10 and neck pain is rated 3/10. He reports pain is worse than previous visit in 2011. He continues to work full duty. Physical exam notes spinal tenderness with positive Spurling's maneuver and trigger points. There is positive bilateral shoulder impingement and tenderness. X-ray and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) were reviewed. The plan includes trigger point injections, epidural steroid injection, home exercise and medication.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Trigger Point Injections, Cervical Spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines ESI.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Trigger point injections Page(s): 122.

**Decision rationale:** According to MTUS guidelines, trigger point injection is; “recommended only for myofascial pain syndrome as indicated below, with limited lasting value. Not recommended for radicular pain. Trigger point injections with an anesthetic such as bupivacaine are recommended for non-resolving trigger points, but the addition of a corticosteroid is not generally recommended. Not recommended for radicular pain. A trigger point is a discrete focal tenderness located in a palpable taut band of skeletal muscle, which produces a local twitch in response to stimulus to the band. Trigger points may be present in up to 33-50% of the adult population. Myofascial pain syndrome is a regional painful muscle condition with a direct relationship between a specific trigger point and its associated pain region. These injections may occasionally be necessary to maintain function in those with myofascial problems when myofascial trigger points are present on examination. Not recommended for typical back pain or neck pain. (Graff-Radford, 2004) (Nelemans-Cochrane, 2002) For fibromyalgia syndrome, trigger point injections have not been proven effective. (Goldenberg, 2004) Trigger point injections with a local anesthetic may be recommended for the treatment of chronic low back or neck pain with myofascial pain syndrome when all of the following criteria are met: (1) Documentation of circumscribed trigger points with evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain; (2) Symptoms have persisted for more than three months; (3) Medical management therapies such as ongoing stretching exercises, physical therapy, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants have failed to control pain; (4) Radiculopathy is not present (by exam, imaging, or neuro-testing); (5) Not more than 3-4 injections per session; (6) No repeat injections unless a greater than 50% pain relief is obtained for six weeks after an injection and there is documented evidence of functional improvement; (7) Frequency should not be at an interval less than two months; (8) Trigger point injections with any substance (e.g., saline or glucose) other than local anesthetic with or without steroid are not recommended.” In this case, there is no evidence of functional improvement with the trigger point injections given on February 6, 2015. There is no evidence of failure of conservative therapies in this patient. In addition, radiculopathy was notably present on physical examination. Therefore, the request for Trigger Point Injections, Cervical Spine is not medically necessary.