

Case Number:	CM15-0079067		
Date Assigned:	04/30/2015	Date of Injury:	10/20/1997
Decision Date:	06/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/24/2015

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

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 75 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on October 20, 1997. He reported bilateral knee pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having bilateral degenerative arthritis. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, multiple joint injections, medications and activity restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complains of chronic bilateral knee pain, left worse than right. The injured worker reported an industrial injury in 1997, resulting in the above noted pain. He was treated conservatively without complete resolution of the pain. He reported improvement with previous injections. X-ray studies revealed bilateral degenerative arthritic changes. Evaluation on February 11, 2015, revealed continued pain as noted. Cortisone injections were administered. Evaluation on March 10, 2015, revealed bilateral knee pain somewhat improved from the last visit with cortisone injections. Synvisc injections to bilateral knees were requested.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Synvisc injection to Bilateral 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: Knee & Leg chapter - Hyaluronic acid injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Knee, Hyaluronic Acid Injections, pages 311-313.

Decision rationale: Published clinical trials comparing injections of visco-supplements with placebo have yielded inconsistent results. ODG states that higher quality and larger trials have generally found lower levels of clinical improvement in pain and function than small and poor quality trials which they conclude that any clinical improvement attributable to visco-supplementation is likely small and not clinically meaningful. They also conclude that evidence is insufficient to demonstrate clinical benefit for the higher molecular weight products. Guidelines recommends Hyaluronic acid injections as an option for osteoarthritis; however, while osteoarthritis of the knee is a recommended indication, there is insufficient evidence for other conditions, including patellofemoral arthritis, chondromalacia patellae, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain). Submitted reports have not demonstrated clear supportive findings for the injection request. The Synvisc injection to Bilateral Knees is not medically necessary and appropriate.