

Case Number:	CM15-0079122		
Date Assigned:	04/30/2015	Date of Injury:	07/26/2012
Decision Date:	07/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/21/2015
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: Florida
Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, 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:

This 46 year old female sustained an industrial injury on 7/26/12. She subsequently reported low back pain. Diagnoses include facet arthropathy and axial low back pain. Treatments to date have included x-ray and MRI studies, surgery, therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, injections and prescription pain medications. The injured worker continues to experience low back. Upon examination, reflexes were 2 plus bilaterally and symmetric, Patrick's, Faber's Gaenslen's and straight leg raising tests were negative. A request for Left and Right L4-5 facet rhizotomy and Left and Right L5-S1 facet rhizotomy was made by the treating physician.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Left L4-5 facet rhizotomy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines - low back, RFA.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support (1) Treatment requires a diagnosis of facet joint pain using a medial branch block as described above. See Facet joint diagnostic blocks (injections). (2) While repeat neurotomies may be required, they should not occur at an interval of less than 6 months from the first procedure. A neurotomy should not be repeated unless duration of relief from the first procedure is documented for at least 12 weeks at 50% relief. The current literature does not support that the procedure is successful without sustained pain relief (generally of at least 6 months duration). No more than 3 procedures should be performed in a year's period. The medical records provided for review do not indicate physical examination findings consistent with facet mediated pain. There is no documentation of quantitative degree of pain improvement or duration in support of congruence with ODG guidelines for repeat RFA. As such RFA is not supported as medically necessary.

Left L5-S1 facet rhizotomy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines - low back, RFA.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support (1) Treatment requires a diagnosis of facet joint pain using a medial branch block as described above. See Facet joint diagnostic blocks (injections). (2) While repeat neurotomies may be required, they should not occur at an interval of less than 6 months from the first procedure. A neurotomy should not be repeated unless duration of relief from the first procedure is documented for at least 12 weeks at 50% relief. The current literature does not support that the procedure is successful without sustained pain relief (generally of at least 6 months duration). No more than 3 procedures should be performed in a year's period. The medical records provided for review do not indicate physical examination findings consistent with facet mediated pain. There is no documentation of quantitative degree of pain improvement or duration in support of congruence with ODG guidelines for repeat RFA. As such RFA is not supported as medically necessary.

Right L4-5 facet rhizotomy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines - low back, RFA.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support (1) Treatment requires a diagnosis of facet joint pain using a medial branch block as described above. See Facet joint diagnostic blocks (injections). (2) While repeat neurotomies may be required, they should not occur at an interval of less than 6 months from the first procedure. A neurotomy should not be repeated unless duration of relief from the first procedure is documented for at least 12 weeks at 50% relief. The current literature does not support that the procedure is successful without sustained pain relief

(generally of at least 6 months duration). No more than 3 procedures should be performed in a year's period. The medical records provided for review do not indicate physical examination findings consistent with facet mediated pain. There is no documentation of quantitative degree of pain improvement or duration in support of congruence with ODG guidelines for repeat RFA. As such RFA is not supported as medically necessary.

Right L5-S1 facet rhizotomy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines - low back, RFA.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support (1) Treatment requires a diagnosis of facet joint pain using a medial branch block as described above. See Facet joint diagnostic blocks (injections). (2) While repeat neurotomies may be required, they should not occur at an interval of less than 6 months from the first procedure. A neurotomy should not be repeated unless duration of relief from the first procedure is documented for at least 12 weeks at 50% relief. The current literature does not support that the procedure is successful without sustained pain relief (generally of at least 6 months duration). No more than 3 procedures should be performed in a year's period. The medical records provided for review do not indicate physical examination findings consistent with facet mediated pain. There is no documentation of quantitative degree of pain improvement or duration in support of congruence with ODG guidelines for repeat RFA. As such RFA is not supported as medically necessary.