

Case Number:	CM15-0079939		
Date Assigned:	04/30/2015	Date of Injury:	12/07/2009
Decision Date:	06/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/27/2015

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 53 year old male with an industrial injury dated 12/07/2009. His diagnosis is degenerative disc disease (lumbar). Prior treatment included physical therapy, diagnostics, TENS unit, pool therapy, lumbar laminectomy and microdiscectomy at lumbar 4-5 and medications. He presents on 03/06/2015 for follow up of chronic pain in the lower back. On 03/12/2015 he was seen by pain management. Physical exam revealed tenderness in the midline of the lower lumbar spine. Range of motion of the lumbar spine was markedly reduced. There was pronounced motor deficit in the right lower extremity. Treatment plan included right sacroiliac joint injections times 3.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right sacroiliac joint injection x 3: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Hip and Pelvis Chapter, Sacroiliac joint blocks.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Hip Chapter, SI Joint, pages 263-264.

Decision rationale: ODG note etiology for SI joint disorder includes degenerative joint disease, joint laxity, and trauma (such as a fall to the buttock). The main cause is SI joint disruption from significant pelvic trauma. Sacroiliac dysfunction is poorly defined and the diagnosis is often difficult to make due to the presence of other low back pathology (including spinal stenosis and facet arthropathy). The diagnosis is also difficult to make as pain symptoms may depend on the region of the SI joint that is involved (anterior, posterior, and/or extra-articular ligaments). Although SI joint injection is recommended as an option for clearly defined diagnosis with positive specific tests for motion palpation and pain provocation for SI joint dysfunction, none have been demonstrated on medical reports submitted. It has also been questioned as to whether SI joint blocks are the "diagnostic gold standard" as the block is felt to show low sensitivity, and discordance has been noted between two consecutive blocks (questioning validity). There is also concern that pain relief from diagnostic blocks may be confounded by infiltration of extra-articular ligaments, adjacent muscles, or sheaths of the nerve roots themselves. Submitted reports have not met guidelines criteria especially when previous SI injections have not been documented to provide any functional improvement for this chronic injury. The Right sacroiliac joint injection x 3 is not medically necessary and appropriate.