

Case Number:	CM15-0092706		
Date Assigned:	05/19/2015	Date of Injury:	02/02/2015
Decision Date:	07/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/13/2015

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: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 61 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 02/02/15. Initial complaints include low back pain. Initial diagnoses include lumbar strain. Treatments to date include physical therapy and medication. Diagnostic studies are not addressed. Current complaints include low back pain and lower extremity radiculopathy. Current diagnoses include lumbar radiculopathy with right leg pain, numbness, and weakness. In a progress note dated 04/01/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as a MRI of the lumbar spine, and 12 acupuncture sessions. The requested treatments include a MRI of the lumbar spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) Lumbar Spine, without contrast, outpatient: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 287-328.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303.

Decision rationale: The MTUS states that unequivocal objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging in patients who do not respond to treatment and who would consider surgery an option. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction should be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Indiscriminant imaging will result in false-positive findings, such as disk bulges, that are not the source of painful symptoms and do not warrant surgery. The medical record fails to document sufficient findings indicative of nerve root compromise, which would warrant an MRI of the lumbar spine. MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) Lumbar Spine, without contrast, outpatient is not medically necessary.