

Case Number:	CM15-0093483		
Date Assigned:	05/19/2015	Date of Injury:	01/03/1998
Decision Date:	07/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/14/2015

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: Texas, New York, 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 applicant is a represented 49-year-old who has filed a claim for knee and leg pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of January 3, 1998. In a utilization review report dated May 4, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for platelet-rich plasma injection therapy for the knee. An RFA form of April 28, 2015 was referenced in the determination, along with a progress note dated April 21, 2015. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a handwritten note dated April 9, 2015, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of knee pain. It was suggested that the applicant was working despite complaints of knee pain apparently attributed to knee arthritis. Large portions of the progress note were difficult to follow and not altogether legible. The applicant was nevertheless returned to regular-duty work. It was suggested that the applicant was apparently not intent on pursuing a total knee arthroplasty procedure for advanced arthritis. In an April 21, 2015 progress note, difficult to follow, not entirely legible, the applicant was apparently described as having advanced, grade 4- patellofemoral osteoarthritis. Platelet-rich plasma injection therapy and/or stem cell injection therapy were sought. As with the preceding note, the note was extremely difficult to follow.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Stem cell therapy/platelet rich plasma of the right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee Chapter (Online version); Platelet-rich plasma (PRP).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Integrated Treatment/Disability Duration Guidelines Knee Platelet-rich plasma (PRP).

Decision rationale: No, the request for stem cell therapy or platelet-rich plasma injection therapy for the right knee was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. The MTUS does not address the topic. However, ODG's Knee Chapter, Platelet-Rich Plasma Topic, seemingly suggests that, while platelet-rich plasma injection therapy is promising for less severe, very early arthritis in younger applicants under age 50, it is not promising for very severe arthritis in older applicants. Here, the applicant was in fact, an older applicant (age 59) and had severe, grade 4-patellofemoral arthritis for which a knee arthroplasty had been recommended. It did not appear, thus, that the applicant was necessarily a good candidate for platelet-rich plasma injection therapy, given the advanced nature of his arthritis. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.