

Case Number:	CM15-0094067		
Date Assigned:	05/20/2015	Date of Injury:	12/01/2011
Decision Date:	06/19/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/18/2015

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: New Jersey, Alabama, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 44-year-old male, who sustained an industrial/work injury on 12/1/11. He reported initial complaints of low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar facet arthropathy, thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis or radiculitis, myofascial pain syndrome, lumbar stenosis, lumbago, lumbar post laminectomy syndrome, and lumbar/sacral disc degeneration. Treatment to date has included medication, diagnostics, and epidural steroid injections. Lumbar MRI results were reported on 12/6/13 and revealed dextroscoliosis of the spine with a Cobb angle of 16 degrees, L2 vertebral body demonstrated chronic superior and inferior endplate fractures, at L2-3, there is a 3 mm broad based right foraminal disc protrusion with bony disc osteophytosis, mild to moderate right foraminal stenosis, L3-4 has a 4 mm central disc protrusion extending into the bilateral neural foramen, moderate right foraminal stenosis, at L4-5 there is a removal of a piece at the L4-5 pedicle screws, posterior interbody fusion, and left sided S pars defect. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain with rating of 6/10 to worse 9/10. Epidural injection gave relief but recent pull on back created pain. Per the primary physician's progress report (PR-2) on 3/27/15, the injured worker was alert and oriented, well developed and well nourished. Current plan of care included continuing medication for pain management. The requested treatments include lower back trigger point injections.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lower back trigger point injections: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for the use of trigger point injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Trigger point injections Page(s): 122.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, trigger point injection is "recommended only for myofascial pain syndrome as indicated below, with limited lasting value. Not recommended for radicular pain. Trigger point injections with an anesthetic such as bupivacaine are recommended for non-resolving trigger points, but the addition of a corticosteroid is not generally recommended. Not recommended for radicular pain. A trigger point is a discrete focal tenderness located in a palpable taut band of skeletal muscle, which produces a local twitch in response to stimulus to the band. Trigger points may be present in up to 33-50% of the adult population. Myofascial pain syndrome is a regional painful muscle condition with a direct relationship between a specific trigger point and its associated pain region. These injections may occasionally be necessary to maintain function in those with myofascial problems when myofascial trigger points are present on examination. Not recommended for typical back pain or neck pain. (Graff-Radford, 2004) (Nelemans-Cochrane, 2002) For fibromyalgia syndrome, trigger point injections have not been proven effective. (Goldenberg, 2004)" "Trigger point injections with a local anesthetic may be recommended for the treatment of chronic low back or neck pain with myofascial pain syndrome when all of the following criteria are met: (1) Documentation of circumscribed trigger points with evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain; (2) Symptoms have persisted for more than three months; (3) Medical management therapies such as ongoing stretching exercises, physical therapy, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants have failed to control pain; (4) Radiculopathy is not present (by exam, imaging, or neuro-testing); (5) Not more than 3-4 injections per session; (6) No repeat injections unless a greater than 50% pain relief is obtained for six weeks after an injection and there is documented evidence of functional improvement; (7) Frequency should not be at an interval less than two months; (8) Trigger point injections with any substance (e.g., saline or glucose) other than local anesthetic with or without steroid are not recommended." There is no clear evidence of myofascial pain and trigger points over the lumbar and sciatic notch. There is no evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain on examination. In addition, there is no documentation of failure of oral medications or physical therapy in this case. Therefore, the request for lumbar Trigger point injection is not medically necessary.