

I-Decisions Inc.

An Independent Review Organization
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NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

DATE OF REVIEW:

Aug/09/2010

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE:

Selective nerve root block at L5-S1 on the right

DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH PHYSICIAN OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO REVIEWED THE DECISION:

M.D., Board Certified Anesthesiologist
Board Certified in Pain Management
American Board of Anesthesiologists

REVIEW OUTCOME:

Upon independent review, the reviewer finds that the previous adverse determination/adverse determinations should be:

- Upheld (Agree)
- Overturned (Disagree)
- Partially Overturned (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW

ODG Guidelines and Treatment Guidelines
Specialty Services 4/30/10, 5/27/10
M.D. 4/30/10
D.O 5/26/10
M.D. 7/9/10
Op Report Rt Lumbar TF ESI 12/19/09, 3/13/10
Follow-up Office Visits 8/31/09 to 5/19/10
Pain Management 4/16/10

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY SUMMARY

The patient received a right L5 and S1 TFESI on 12/19/10 and 3/13/10. The patient was noted to have received 60% relief with both injections. There is no mention of how long this pain relief lasted or if the patient was able to increase his function. On 4/16/10, the patient complained of "pain down the right leg."

ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION INCLUDING CLINICAL BASIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE DECISION

According to the ODG, "if after the initial block/blocks are given and found to produce pain relief of at least 50-70% pain relief for at least 6-8 weeks, additional blocks may be required." The ODG also states, "repeat injections should be based on continued objective documented pain relief, decreased need for pain medications, and functional response." There is no mention in the records of a decreased need for pain medications or increase in the patient's function. The note dated 4/16/10 recommends "holding off any further epidural injections." The request is for a right L5 and S1 selective nerve root block. Per the ODG, "diagnostic epidural steroid transforaminal injections are also referred to as selective nerve root blocks."

Since diagnostic ESI's have already been performed, a selective nerve root block is not indicated. According to ODG, a selective nerve root block is indicated:

- 1) To determine the level of radicular pain, in cases where diagnostic imaging is ambiguous, including the examples below;
- 2) To help to evaluate a pain generator when physical signs and symptoms differ from that found on imaging studies;
- 3) To help to determine pain generators when there is evidence of multi-level nerve root compression;
- 4) To help to determine pain generators when clinical findings are consistent with radiculopathy (e.g., dermatomal distribution) but imaging studies are inconclusive;
- 5) To help to identify the origin of pain in patients who have had previous spinal surgery.

None of these issues are noted as problems with this patient. The exact rationale for recommending a selective nerve root block is not documented. The reviewer finds that medical necessity does not exist for Selective nerve root block at L5-S1 on the right.

A DESCRIPTION AND THE SOURCE OF THE SCREENING CRITERIA OR OTHER CLINICAL BASIS USED TO MAKE THE DECISION

ACOEM-AMERICA COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE UM KNOWLEDGEBASE

AHCPR-AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH & QUALITY GUIDELINES

DWC-DIVISION OF WORKERS COMPENSATION POLICIES OR GUIDELINES

EUROPEAN GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN

INTERQUAL CRITERIA

MEDICAL JUDGEMENT, CLINICAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED MEDICAL STANDARDS

MERCY CENTER CONSENSUS CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

MILLIMAN CARE GUIDELINES

ODG-OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES & TREATMENT GUIDELINES

PRESSLEY REED, THE MEDICAL DISABILITY ADVISOR

TEXAS GUIDELINES FOR CHIROPRACTIC QUALITY ASSURANCE & PRACTICE PARAMETERS

TEXAS TACADA GUIDELINES

TMF SCREENING CRITERIA MANUAL

PEER REVIEWED NATIONALLY ACCEPTED MEDICAL LITERATURE (PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION)

OTHER EVIDENCE BASED, SCIENTIFICALLY VALID, OUTCOME FOCUSED GUIDELINES (PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION)