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2022 SUMMER ZOOMINAR SERIES

“THE QME REPORT WRITING MASTERY CLASS”

THE WHEN AND HOW TO ADD MULTIPLE IMPAIRMENTS TEMPLATE

A physician may consider that when there are multiple parts of body involved, the combined effect of these disabilities may have a synergistic effect on each other, thereby increasing disability and impairment. This combination of the disabilities over many different parts of the body may make the applicant much more disabled than each of the body parts considered separately.

Under ordinary circumstances, when we obtain whole person impairment ratings for various parts of the body, the total Impairment is calculated through the use of the combined values chart (CVC). However, when *combining* multiple Impairments, the CVC significantly reduces an individual's overall disability.

But, combining Impairments under the CVC is not the only method. If you refer to page 10 of the AMA Guides you will see “a scientific formula has not been established to indicate the best way to combine multiple impairments. Given the

diversity of impairments and great variability inherent in combining multiple impairments, it is difficult to establish a formula that accounts for all situations. A combination of some impairments could decrease overall functioning more than suggested by just adding the impairment ratings for the separate impairments (for example, blindness and inability to use both hands). When other multiple Impairments are combined, a less than additive approach may be appropriate.”

Thus, any approach at combining the Impairments that results in an accurate total rating may be used. Further, an applicant who has only an orthopedic, or an internal, or a psych injury receives full value for his or her whole person impairment and or permanent disability. Yet, due to the artificial construction of the combined values chart, which is not based on any science or fact, an injured worker who suffers from injury to more than one part of the body or body system, will not get full value of his or her whole person impairment, or disability.

Therefore, in the case of multiple Impairments, provide your opinion as to whether any whole person impairment for orthopedic injuries *overlaps* with any whole person impairment for any potential internal injuries, neurologic injuries, and/or injuries to other body parts or body regions. If not (no overlap), please advise whether it is more accurate to *add* the whole person impairments instead of using the artificial combined values chart.

Then, if you opine that adding the Impairments is appropriate, provide the medical reasoning for this opinion, such as 1) “these whole person impairments do not overlap” and/or 2) “adding the whole person impairment better reflects the synergistic effects involving multiple parts of the body/conditions” and/or simply 3) “adding is a more accurate assessment of overall disability.”

TERMS DEFINED

SYNERGY - the interaction or cooperation of two or more systems that produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects....Combined effect (ADL loss) of the body parts is greater than the sum of their separate effects.

- What is support for “synergistic effect?”
- How does Impairment A make Impairment B worse?

OVERLAP - combined effect (ADL loss) of the body parts is less than the sum of their separate effects.

- How are ADL limitations differentiated (Impairment A vs. Impairment B)
- Does the Whole Person Impairment correlate with the disability (ADL deficits)?

MOST ACCURATE RATING - Have you provided the *MOST accurate* rating and included a statement of such – along with some substantial reasoning as to “how” and “why” adding the Impairments results in the most accurate rating?