

Case Number:	CM13-0017639		
Date Assigned:	10/11/2013	Date of Injury:	03/30/2011
Decision Date:	01/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/15/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/28/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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 physician 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 44-year-old female who reported an injury on 03/30/2011 and her mechanism of injury was noted as numbness and tingling while she was sewing. Her diagnoses are listed as lateral epicondylitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. Her symptoms include pain in the upper extremities, numbness and tingling in the hands bilaterally, right greater than left, pain in her right elbow, and shooting pain at the level of her wrists from the palm to the forearm. Her medications are noted as Soma 350 mg at bedtime and Duexis 800/26.6 mg tabs twice a day. The physical exam findings include tenderness to palpation over the lateral epicondyle, positive Tinel's sign, positive Phalen's sign at the wrist, positive Tinel's sign at the wrist, tenderness to palpation over the radial side, decreased sensation in the right 3rd, 4th, and 5th digits and over the radial nerve distributions, and her grip strength was noted to be weak bilaterally. At her 05/30/2013 office visit, it was noted that the physician was going to start her on a trial of a topical compounded cream. A request was made for Terocin topical cream, which is noted to include lidocaine and menthol.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Terocin topical cream: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Section Salicylate Topicals Section Page(s): s 111-113; 105.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS Guidelines state that salicylate topicals (menthol) is significantly better than placebo in chronic pain and, therefore, is recommended as a topical analgesic. However, the use of lidocaine is recommended for localized peripheral pain after there has been evidence of a trial of a first line therapy such as a tricyclic or SNRI antidepressant or an antiepilepsy drug such as Gabapentin or Lyrica. It is also used off label for diabetic neuropathy, but further research is needed to recommend this treatment for chronic neuropathic pain disorders other than postherpetic neuralgia. Topical lidocaine is stated to be not recommended for non-neuropathic pain. Furthermore, the guidelines state that, for compounded topical analgesics, any compounded product that contains at least 1 drug that is not recommended is not recommended. The use of menthol, a salicylate topical, would be supported by guidelines for this patient; however, as more information is needed regarding the use of lidocaine as the patient is not noted to have any of the indications for the use of topical lidocaine, the request is not certified as the guidelines state that if 1 component of the compounded medication is not recommended, then the compounded medication is not recommended. Therefore, the requested service is non-certified.