

Case Number:	CM13-0038525		
Date Assigned:	12/18/2013	Date of Injury:	12/12/2006
Decision Date:	02/04/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/03/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/25/2013

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 Family Practice, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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:

Male claimant who sustained an injury while working as a plumber that resulted in chronic back pain with radicular symptoms. He has had microdiscectomy without significant improvement. A report on 1/10/13 indicated limited range of lumbar range of motion as well as muscle spasms which were not controlled on Norco. At the time, the claimant was prescribed Flexeril for muscle spasms. A report on 10/30/13 indicated he still had 7/10 pain with para-lumbar spasms with reduced range of motion. He has been taking Norco and Flexeril for pain and spasms continuously since January 2013. At the conclusion of the exam the medications were requested to be continued along with home exercise.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Fexmid 7.5mg #60 between 9/19/2013 and 11/30/2013: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril, Amrix, Fexmid, generic available).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants Page(s): 41, 63.

Decision rationale: Fexmid is Cyclobenzaprine. According to the MTUS guidelines: Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) is more effective than placebo for back pain. It is recommended for

short course therapy and has the greatest benefit in the first 4 days suggesting that shorter courses may be better. This class of medications is recommend as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (Van Tulder, 1998) (van Tulder, 2003) (van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. The claimant has been on the medication for over 10 months with direct benefit noted and continued to require further surgeries. The continued use of Fexmid is not medically necessary.

Norco 10/325mg #120 between 9/19/2013 and 11/30/2013: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 82-92.

Decision rationale: Norco is a short acting opioid used for breakthrough pain. According to the MTUS guidelines are not indicated at 1st line therapy for neuropathic pain, and chronic back pain . It is not indicated for mechanical or compressive etiologies. It is recommended for a trial basis for short-term use. Long Term-use has not been supported by any trials. In this case, the claimant has been on Norco for almost a year with no improvement in pain scale . The continued use of Norco is not medically necessary