

Case Number:	CM13-0055945		
Date Assigned:	12/30/2013	Date of Injury:	11/26/2012
Decision Date:	03/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/08/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/21/2013

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 Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York and Tennessee. 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 33-year-old male who was injured on November 26, 2012 when he fell from a stepladder injuring his chest, back, and neck. The patient continued to experience pain in low back, left leg, left neck, and left arm. Physical examination showed positive straight leg raises and tenderness over spinous process from T10- L5. MRI of the lumbosacral spine done on 2/11/13 showed 2-3 mm disc bulge at L4-5. Treatment included medications and physical therapy. Requests for compounded medication flurbiprofen 15%/cyclobenzaprine 10% and compounded medication tramadol 8%/gabapentin/10%/menthol 2%/camphor 2% was received on October 16, 2013.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Compounded medication Flurbiprofen 15%/Cyclobenzaprine 10%: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 72, 111-113.

Decision rationale: Topical analgesics are recommended for neuropathic pain when anticonvulsants and antidepressants have failed. Compounded topical analgesics are commonly

prescribed and there is little to no research to support the use of these compounds. Furthermore, the guidelines state that "Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended." Flurbiprofen is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). Topical NSAIDs have been shown to be superior to placebo in the treatment of osteoarthritis, but only in the short term and not for extended treatment. The effect appears to diminish over time. Absorption of the medication can occur and may have systemic side effects comparable to oral form. Adverse effects for GI toxicity and renal function have been reported. It has not been evaluated for treatment of the spine, hip, or shoulder. Flurbiprofen is recommended as an oral agent for the treatment of osteoarthritis and the treatment of mild to moderate pain. It is not recommended as a topical preparation. Cyclobenzaprine is a muscle relaxant. There is no evidence to support the use of muscle relaxants as topical agents. This compounded medication is not authorized.

Compounded medication Tramadol 8%/Gabapentin 10%/Menthol 2%/Camphor 2%:
Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 93-94, 111-113.

Decision rationale: Topical analgesics are recommended for neuropathic pain when anticonvulsants and antidepressants have failed. Compounded topical analgesics are commonly prescribed and there is little to no research to support the use of these compounds. Furthermore, the guidelines state that "Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended." In this case the patient received multidrug compound for medication. Tramadol is a synthetic opioid affecting the central nervous system. It has several side effects which include increasing the risk of seizure in patients taking SSRI's, TCA's and other opioids. There is no comment on its use as a topical agent. Gabapentin is not recommended. There is no peer-reviewed literature to support use. There are no guidelines present for camphor or menthol. This medication contains drugs that are not recommended and therefore, cannot be recommended.