

Case Number:	CM13-0062814		
Date Assigned:	05/07/2014	Date of Injury:	04/16/2013
Decision Date:	07/09/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/20/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/09/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Neuromuscular 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 expert 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:

██████████ is a patient who sustained a work related injury on April 16 2013. Subsequently, the patient developed continuous cervical and lumbar pain. According to a note dated on November 4 2013, the patient reported pain, weakness and stiffness in the thoracic and lumbar spine. The patient physical examination showed tenderness in the cervical and lumbar spine as well as left shoulder. The patient was diagnosed with cervical and lumbar sprain as well as left shoulder strain. The provider requested authorization to use ultram.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

ULTRAM 50MG #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines OPIOIDS Page(s): 93-94.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol Page(s): 113.

Decision rationale: According to California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) guidelines, Ultram is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. Although, Ultram may be needed to help with the patient pain, it may not help with the weaning process from opioids. Ultram could be used if exacerbation of

pain after or during the weaning process. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: "(a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects" Pain assessment should include: "current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework." There is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement with previous use of opioids (Tramadol). There no clear documentation of the need for ongoing use of tramadol. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the patient with his medication. There is no clear justification for the need to continue the use of Tramadol. Therefore, the request for 60 Ultram 50mg is not medically necessary at this time.