

Case Number:	CM13-0064097		
Date Assigned:	01/03/2014	Date of Injury:	03/10/2001
Decision Date:	03/31/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/27/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/11/2013

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 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:

This 64 year-old male sustained an injury to his abdominal wall when lifting a manhole on 3/10/01 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request under consideration include TG hot topical cream (10% gabapentin, 8% tramadol, 2% menthol, 2% camphor, 0.05% capsaicin). Comorbidities include obesity, diabetes type 2 with possible diabetic neuropathy and retinopathy, smoking, umbilical hernia repair in 1996, and hemorrhoids. Report of 10/24/13 from the provider noted patient with anterior chest wall and anterior/inferior rib pain. Compound cream has provided some relief as well as the Lidoderm patch. The patient forgets to take Neurontin. Exam indicated tenderness over anterior chest and along right side T9-11 rib cage with complaints of upper gastric pain and swelling. There is a CT scan of the chest report of 8/13/13 noting no evidence of active cardiac or pulmonary disease; degenerative arthritis of thoracic spine with ossification of anterior longitudinal ligament; probable cholelithiasis with 15-mm gallstone. Diagnoses included abdominal hernia, s/p chest wall contusion with residual pain and rule out intercostal neuralgia at T7-11 on right side. Plan included continuing with TG hot and Lidoderm 5% patches. The patient voiced hesitancy for nerve blocks as he is apprehensive of steroid use due to his blood sugar issue. The compound cream above was non-certified on 11/27/13 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TG hot topical cream (10% gabapentin, 8% tramadol, 2% menthol, 2% camphor, 0.05% capsaicin): Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines, the efficacy in clinical trials for topical analgesic treatment modality has been inconsistent and most studies are small and of short duration. These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. There is little evidence to utilize topical compound analgesic over oral NSAIDs or other pain relievers for a patient without contraindication in taking oral medications. There are no evidenced-based studies to indicate efficacy of capsaicin 0.05% formulation nor anti-epileptic medication Gabapentin or topic opioid of Tramadol over oral delivery. Submitted reports have not demonstrated any functional improvement, specific pain relief on VAS rating, and change in work status or increase in activities of daily living functions from treatment already rendered to treat this chronic injury of 2001. Submitted reports have not adequately documented the indication or medical need for this topical compounded analgesic outside guidelines recommendations. The TG hot topical cream (10% gabapentin, 8% tramadol, 2% menthol, 2% camphor, 0.05% capsaicin is not medically necessary and appropriate.