

Case Number:	CM14-0012487		
Date Assigned:	02/21/2014	Date of Injury:	10/25/2000
Decision Date:	08/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	12/27/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/30/2014

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 Occupational 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:

The patient is a 57-year-old male who has submitted a claim for neuropathic pain of the upper and lower extremities, failed neck surgery syndrome, chronic pain syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy, facet arthropathy at L3-4, L4-5 and L5-S1, carpal tunnel syndrome, multiple trigger points, associated with an industrial injury date of October 25, 2000. The medical records from 2011 through 2013 were reviewed, which showed that the patient complained of persistent headaches, low back pain, neck pain with radiation to upper extremities accompanied by numbness and tingling and bilateral lower extremity weakness. The physical examination revealed no tenderness over the cervical spine. There was noted tenderness, spasms and weakness of the left deltoid. The treatment to date has included spinal fusion C4-7, anterior cervical discectomy fusion C3-4, right shoulder arthroscopy, anterior and posterior fusion, physical therapy, acupuncture, steroid injections, medications, which include Lidoderm patches, Percocet, Baclofen, Relafen, Neurontin, and Cymbalta. The utilization review from December 27, 2013 denied the request for Air Salonpas Spray 80ml, as needed for pain #10. The rationale for determination was not included in the records for review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Air solonpas spray 80ml #10, as needed for pain: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Salicylate topicals Page(s): 105.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Salicylate topicals; Topical analgesics Page(s): 105, and 111-113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Section, Topical Salicylates.

Decision rationale: Topical analgesics are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine safety or efficacy. There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Salonpas contains camphor, menthol and methyl salicylate. The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that topical salicylates are significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. The Official Disability Guidelines indicate that the FDA has issued an alert in 2012, indicating that topical over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers that contain menthol, methyl salicylate, or capsaicin, may in rare instances cause serious burns. In this case, the patient has not been on prior use of Air Salonpas. The rationale of using a topical treatment is to reduce the pain and decrease the need for oral medications. This medication may be a reasonable option for the patient's chronic pain symptoms; however, the request for ten (10) units without evidence of symptomatic and functional improvement is excessive. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.