

Case Number:	CM14-0137138		
Date Assigned:	09/05/2014	Date of Injury:	02/09/2011
Decision Date:	12/31/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/11/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/25/2014

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 Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 58-year-old male who was injured on February 9, 2011. The patient continued to experience pain in his left knee. Physical examination was notable for patient in no acute distress with intact gait, tenderness in the joint line, and crepitus with painful range of motion. Diagnoses included lateral epicondylitis, leg joint pain, and lumbago. Treatment included medications and Synvisc injection. Requests for authorization for Diclofenac Sodium 100 mg #120, Omeprazole 20 mg #120, Ondansetron 8 mg #30, Cyclobenzaprine 7.5 mg #120, and Tramadol ER 150 mg # 90 were submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Diclofenac sodium ER (Voltaren SR) 100mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDS (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs)..

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Medical Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 67-68. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain, Diclofenac.

Decision rationale: Diclofenac is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). Chronic Medical Treatment Guidelines state that "anti-inflammatory drugs are the traditional first line of

treatment, but long term use may not be warranted". For osteoarthritis it was recommended that the lowest dose for the shortest length of time be used. It was not shown to be more effective than acetaminophen, and had more adverse side effects. Adverse effects for GI toxicity and renal function have been reported. Medications for chronic pain usually provide temporary relief. Diclofenac is not recommended as first line due to increased risk profile. A large systematic review of available evidence on NSAIDs confirms that Diclofenac, a widely used NSAID, poses an equivalent risk of cardiovascular events to patients as did Rofecoxib (Vioxx). This is a significant issue and doctors should avoid Diclofenac because it increases the risk by about 40%. The request is not medically necessary.

Omeprazole delayed-release capsules 20mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI Symptoms & Cardiovascular Risk.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Medical Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 68.

Decision rationale: Omeprazole is a proton pump inhibitor (PPI). PPI's are used in the treatment of peptic ulcer disease and may be prescribed in patients who are using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and are at high risk for gastrointestinal events. Risk factors for high-risk events are age greater than 65, history of peptic ulcer, GI bleeding or perforation, concurrent use of ASA, corticosteroids, and/or an anticoagulant, or high dose/multiple NSAID (e.g., NSAID + low-dose ASA). The patient in this case was using NSAID medication, but did not have any of the risk factors for a gastrointestinal event. The request is not medically necessary.

Ondansetron ODT tablets 8mg #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines-Treatment for Worker's Compensation, Antiemetics (for Opioid Nausea).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain: Antiemetics (for Opioid Nausea).

Decision rationale: Ondansetron, a serotonin 5-HT₃ receptor antagonist, is an antiemetic. It is FDA-approved for nausea and vomiting secondary to chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Antiemetics are not recommended for nausea and vomiting secondary to chronic opioid use. Nausea and vomiting is common with use of opioids. These side effects tend to diminish over days to weeks of continued exposure. Studies of opioid adverse effects including nausea and vomiting are limited to short-term duration (less than four weeks) and have limited application to long-term use. If nausea and vomiting remains prolonged, other etiologies of these symptoms should be evaluated for. Medical necessity has not been established. The request should not be authorized.

Cyclobenzaprine hydrochloride tablet 7.5mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants for Pain. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Muscle Relaxants

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Medical Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 63.

Decision rationale: Cyclobenzaprine, a muscle relaxant, is recommended as an option, for a short course of therapy. It has been found to be more effective than placebo with greater adverse side effects. Its greatest effect is in the first 4 days. Treatment should be brief. Non-sedating muscle relaxants are recommended with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment (less than two weeks) of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. 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. Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. In this case the requested quantity of medication indicates treatment with muscle relaxant for 30-60 days. The duration of treatment surpasses the recommended short-term duration of two weeks. The request medication is not medically necessary.

Tramadol hydrochloride ER 150mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids for Chronic Pain. .

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Medical Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 74-96.

Decision rationale: 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. Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that opioids are not recommended as a first line therapy. Opioid should be part of a treatment plan specific for the patient and should follow criteria for use. Criteria for use include establishment of a treatment plan, determination if pain is nociceptive or neuropathic, failure of pain relief with non-opioid analgesics, setting of specific functional goals, and opioid contract with agreement for random drug testing. If analgesia is not obtained, opioids should be discontinued. The patient should be screened for likelihood that he or she could be weaned from the opioids if there is no improvement in pain or function. It is recommended for short-term use if first-line options, such as acetaminophen or NSAIDs have failed. In this case there is no documentation with regards to the duration or efficacy of treatment with Tramadol. In addition there is no documentation that the patient has signed an opioid contract or is participating in urine drug testing. Criteria for long-term opioid use have not been met. The request medication is not medically necessary.

