

Case Number:	CM14-0158449		
Date Assigned:	10/01/2014	Date of Injury:	08/09/2006
Decision Date:	12/26/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/26/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in 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 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 43-year-old female who has submitted a claim for low-back pain, thoracic/lumbosacral neuritis/radiculitis, and opioid-induced constipation associated with an industrial injury date of 8/9/2006. Medical records from 2014 were reviewed. The patient complained of chronic low back pain associated with muscle spasm and bilateral lower extremity radiculopathy. Patient likewise complained of pain-induced depression. Patient reported that intake of lamotrigine provided relief from nerve pain by over 50%. Physical examination of the lumbar spine showed tenderness and positive facet loading test. Range of motion was restricted on all planes. Motor strength of right lower extremity muscles was rated 4/5. Sensation was diminished at bilateral L4 and L5 dermatomes. Treatment to date has included medications such as Lyrica, OxyContin, Zolpidem, Lamictal (since February 2014), Viibryd, Docusate, Omeprazole and Cymbalta. Utilization review from 9/22/2014 denied the request for Lamictal 200mg #30 because there was no evidence that patient was initially prescribed first-line therapy, such as Gabapentin.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lamictal 200mg #30: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 20, 78, 86.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-Epilepsy Drugs, Lamotrigine Page(s): 16-17, 20.

Decision rationale: As stated on pages 16 - 17 of CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, antidepressants, such as Pregabalin and Gabapentin, are recommended as a first line option for neuropathic pain, i.e., painful polyneuropathy. Outcomes with at least 50% reduction of pain are considered good responses while those with 30% reduction may consider another or additional agent. Page 20 states that Lamotrigine (Lamictal) has been proven to be moderately effective for treatment of trigeminal neuralgia, HIV, and central post-stroke pain. Due to side effects and slow titration period, Lamotrigine is not generally recommended as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain due to the availability of more effective treatments including other antiepileptic drugs and antidepressants. In this case, patient complained of chronic low back pain associated with muscle spasm and bilateral lower extremity radiculopathy. Patient likewise complained of pain-induced depression. Patient was initially prescribed Lyrica without symptom relief prompting initiation of Lamotrigine since February 2014. She is likewise currently on Viibryd and Cymbalta. Patient reports that Lamotrigine provided relief from nerve pain by over 50%. The medical necessity has been established. Therefore, the request for Lamictal 200mg #30 is medically necessary.