

Case Number:	CM14-0167484		
Date Assigned:	10/14/2014	Date of Injury:	02/08/2007
Decision Date:	12/12/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/10/2014

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 Physical Medicine & 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 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:

This is a 39-year-old female claimant who sustained a work injury on August 6, 2006. The specifics of the injury are not mentioned but she suffers from chronic pain and fibromyalgia. The progress note on August 28, 2014 indicated the claimant completed chiropractic therapy. She had been using muscle relaxers (Skelaxin) and Flector patches. Examination findings indicated reduced range of motion of the neck. She had a previous EMG indicated bilateral ulnar mononeuropathy. Prior MRIs indicated cervical disc disease. She had undergone injection treatment in the past. The treating physician requested continuation of the above medications as well as six additional visits for chiropractic therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

FLECTOR PATCHES: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical analgesics Page(s): 111-112.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, topical analgesics are recommended as an option as indicated below. They are largely experimental in use with few randomized

controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. Flector contains a topical NSAID. There is little evidence to utilize topical NSAIDs for treatment of osteoarthritis of the spine, hip or shoulder. Topical NSAIDs have been shown in meta-analysis to be superior to placebo during the first 2 weeks of treatment for osteoarthritis, but either not afterward, or with a diminishing effect over another 2-week period. In this case, the claimant has been prescribed a Flector for over a month. There is limited evidence to support long-term use of Flector. Particular location for application of Flector was also not specified. The Flector patch is not medically necessary.

METAXALONE: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxers Page(s): 61-63.

Decision rationale: Metaxalone (Skelaxin) is recommended with caution as a second-line option for short-term pain relief in patients with chronic LBP. According to the MTUS guidelines, muscle relaxants are to be used with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic low back pain. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most low back pain 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. In this case, the claimant had been on Skelaxin for several months. Continued and chronic use of Metaxalone is not medically necessary.