

Case Number:	CM14-0168391		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2014	Date of Injury:	01/27/2012
Decision Date:	11/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/11/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/13/2014

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 Internal 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 72 year old female who suffered her injury on 1/27/12. Her complaints on 6/12/14 were neck pain and lower back pain rated as 8/10. It was noted that PT and extracorporeal shock wave therapy aided in pain control. Her diagnoses were cervical and lumbar discogenic spine pain with radiculitis, exacerbation of cervical pain, and also thoracic spine pain. The treating M.D. recommended continuing PT and use the 2 topical pain compounded medication: Flurbiprofen powder, cyclobenzaprine powder and Alba-Derm powder, and Tramadol HCL powder, Gabapentin powder, Menthol crystals, Camphor crystals, Capsaicin powder and Alba-derm cream. However, the UR rejected the use of these 2 topical compounded medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Compound medication: Flurbiprofen powder, Cyclobenzaprine powder, Alba-Derm cream: Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: Topical analgesic applications are largely experimental and lack randomized controlled trials to support their use. They are applied locally to the painful area and used primarily for neuropathic pain after an adequate trial of anticonvulsant and antidepressant pain medications. They lack systemic side effects, drug toxicity, or the need to titrate dosing. They are often compounded from a variety of components and many of the individual meds have failed to show efficacy. If one of the included compounds is not recommended the entire analgesic cream is not recommended. Noted, the use of these topical compounds is largely experimental and used primarily for neuropathic pain and that if one component is not recommended then the entire compound cannot be recommended. Alpha-Derm cream was not noted in the MTUS or in any other research. Therefore, the entire compound cannot be considered medically necessary.

Compound medication: Tramadol HCL powder, Gabapentin powder, Menthol crystals, Camphor crystals, Capsaicin powder, Alba-Derm Cream: Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: Topical analgesic applications are largely experimental and lack randomized controlled trials to support their use. They are applied locally to the painful area and used primarily for neuropathic pain after an adequate trial of anticonvulsant and antidepressant pain medications. They lack systemic side effects, drug toxicity, or the need to titrate dosing. They are often compounded from a variety of components and many of the individual meds have failed to show efficacy. If one of the included compounds is not recommended the entire analgesic cream is not recommended. Noted, these topical applications are largely experimental and that their use should be primarily for neuropathic pain. The component Alba-derm cream was not discussed in either the MTUS or any other references. Therefore, the entire compound cannot be recommended. Also, the MTUS states that anticonvulsants and antidepressants PO meds should be the initial meds utilized for neuropathic pain. The request is not medically necessary.