

Case Number:	CM14-0170414		
Date Assigned:	10/20/2014	Date of Injury:	03/10/2014
Decision Date:	11/20/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/03/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/15/2014

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 and Rehabilitation; has a subspecialty in Pain 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 3/10/14. A utilization review determination dated 10/3/14 recommends non-certification of Ultram ER. 7/10/14 medical report identifies headaches with episodic blurred vision and some dizziness, neck and shoulder discomfort attenuated with the use of medications, which have been very helpful in decreasing the symptoms. On exam, there is right shoulder/neck tenderness. Spurling sign is associated with discomfort that radiates into the right arm. Recommendations include neurology consult and Ultram ER.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective request for Ultram ER 150mg #30 on 7/10/2014: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol (Ultram, Ultram ER, generic available in immediate releas.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120 of 1 27.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for Ultram ER, California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines note that it is an opiate pain medication. Due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing

opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, while there is mention that the medication is helpful, there is no indication that the medication is improving the patient's function or pain in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS, no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In light of the above issues, the currently requested Ultram ER is not medically necessary..