

Case Number:	CM14-0174760		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2014	Date of Injury:	09/18/1996
Decision Date:	12/04/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/22/2014

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 76-year-old male who was injured on September 18, 1996. The patient continued to experience pain in his lower back. Physical examination was notable for antalgic gait and restricted range of motion of the lumbar spine, decreased strength of the extensor hallucis longus/extensor digitorum, anterior tibialis, and toe flexors bilaterally, and sensory deficit circumferentially of the feet and lower legs bilaterally. Diagnoses included lumbar intervertebral disc disorder with displacement. Treatment included medications and surgery. Request for authorization for compound cream diclofenac/gabapentin/baclofen/cyclobenzaprine/tetracycline was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Compound cream- Diclofenac 3%/Gabapentin 6%/Baclofen 2%/Cyclobenzaprine 2%/Tetracycline 2% 300 grams #3: 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 Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 111-112. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: UpToDate: Tetracyclines

Decision rationale: Diclofenac/gabapentin/baclofen/cyclobenzaprine/tetracycline is a compounded topical analgesic. Topical analgesics are recommended for neuropathic pain when anticonvulsants and antidepressants have failed. Compounded topical analgesics are commonly prescribed and there is little to no research to support the use of these compounds. Furthermore, the guidelines state that "Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended." Diclofenac gel is a topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). Topical NSAIDs have been shown to be superior to placebo in the treatment of osteoarthritis, but only in the short term and not for extended treatment. The effect appears to diminish over time. Absorption of the medication can occur and may have systemic side effects comparable to oral form. It is indicated for relief of osteoarthritis pain in joints that lend themselves to topical treatment (ankle, elbow, foot, hand, knee, and wrist). It has not been evaluated for treatment of the spine, hip or shoulder. In this case the patient is using the medication for his back. The medication is not recommended. Gabapentin is not recommended. There is no peer-reviewed literature to support use. Baclofen is not recommended. There is no peer-reviewed literature to support the use of topical baclofen. Cyclobenzaprine is a muscle relaxant. There is no evidence for use of this muscle relaxant as a topical product. Tetracycline is a bacteriostatic antibiotic that inhibits bacterial protein synthesis. It is not recommended as a topical medication. This medication contains drugs that are not recommended. Therefore the medication cannot be recommended.