

Case Number:	CM14-0183544		
Date Assigned:	11/10/2014	Date of Injury:	02/24/2014
Decision Date:	12/12/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/04/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 injured worker is a 42-year-old man who sustained a work-related injury on February 24, 2014. Subsequently, the injured worker developed chronic back pain. The pain severity was rated 3/10 and the pain is exacerbated at night. The injured worker was complaining of neck pain with a severity rated 3-7/10. The injured worker also was complaining of left elbow pain with a severity rated 5/10. According to a progress report dated on May 5 2014, the injured worker physical examination was significant for lumbar tenderness. The rest of the physical examination was normal. The injured worker was diagnosed with the back and neck and thoracic pain. The injured worker was treated with the tramadol without full pain control. The provider request authorization to continue Tramadol.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol HCL 50mg #60 Q 12 hrs: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, Criteria for Use.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol Page(s): 113.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Ultram (Tramadol) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy.(b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function.(c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. Although, Tramadol may be needed to help with the injured worker pain, there is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement from its previous use. There is no objective documentation of pain severity level to justify the use of tramadol with Norco in this injured worker. There is no clear documentation of the efficacy/safety of previous use of tramadol. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the injured worker with his medications. Therefore, the request for Tramadol HCL 50mg #60 Q 12 hrs is not medically necessary.