

Case Number:	CM14-0020936		
Date Assigned:	04/30/2014	Date of Injury:	11/22/2005
Decision Date:	10/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	02/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/19/2014

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 41-year-old male who was injured on November 22, 2005. The patient continued to experience pain in his bilateral knees. Physical examination was notable for normal motor strength, positive bilateral patellofemoral crepitation, and bilateral positive grind test. Diagnoses included status post ACL construction and bilateral knee injury. Treatment included surgery, physical therapy, Synvisc injections, and medications. Request for authorization for tramadol was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TRAMADOL: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation MTUS: CHRONIC PAIN MEDICAL TREATMENT GUIDELINES, CENTRAL ACTING ANALGESICS, 75

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 74-96.

Decision rationale: Tramadol is a synthetic opioid affecting the central nervous system. It has several side effects, which include increasing the risk of seizure in patients taking SSRI's, TCA's and other opioids. Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that opioids are not

recommended as a first line therapy. Opioid should be part of a treatment plan specific for the patient and should follow criteria for use. Criteria for use include establishment of a treatment plan, determination if pain is nociceptive or neuropathic, failure of pain relief with non-opioid analgesics, setting of specific functional goals, and opioid contract with agreement for random drug testing. If analgesia is not obtained, opioids should be discontinued. The patient should be screened for likelihood that he or she could be weaned from the opioids if there is no improvement in pain or function. It is recommended for short-term use if first-line options, such as acetaminophen or NSAIDs have failed. In this case there is no documentation that the patient is experiencing pain that is not controlled by acetaminophen. There is no tenderness on examination and the patient is in no apparent distress. As such, the request is not medically necessary.