

Case Number:	CM14-0051801		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2014	Date of Injury:	06/14/2006
Decision Date:	09/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/18/2014

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 Family 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 48 year old male patient who reported an industrial injury on 6/14/2006, over 8 years ago, attributed to the performance of his customary job tasks reported as making a delivery of a keg of beer up a stairway using a dolly. The patient complains of ongoing back pain radiating to the LLE. The objective findings on examination included antalgica posture; normal muscle tone; paraspinous tone normal; moderate spasm; TTP to the facets, paraspinous muscles and lumbar spinous process; diminished ROM of the lumbar spine; neurovascular was normal. The diagnosis was post laminectomy syndrome of the lumbar spine. The patient was prescribed Norco 10/325 mg #120; Nucynta ER 100 mg #60; and Voltaren 1% topical gel.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Voltaren 1%: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics; NSAIDs Page(s): 111-113; 22, 67-68, 71. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004) Chapter 6 page 114-15, and the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter, Topical Analgesics; NSAIDs.

Decision rationale: The topical NSAID, Voltaren gel or cream, is not medically necessary in addition to prescribed oral NSAIDs. The patient has been prescribed topical Voltaren gel in addition to oral Naproxen. The patient has received topical NSAID gels for a prolonged period of time exceeding the time period recommended by evidence based guidelines. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for both an oral NSAID and a topical NSAID. There is no provided subjective or objective evidence that the patient has failed or not responded to other conventional and recommended forms of treatment for relief of the effects of the industrial injury. Only if the subjective/objective findings are consistent with the recommendations of the California MTUS, then topical use of topical preparations is only recommended for short-term use for specific orthopedic diagnoses. There is no documented functional improvement by the provider attributed to the topical NSAID. The use of topical NSAIDs is documented to have efficacy for only 2-4 weeks subsequent to injury and thereafter is not demonstrated to be as effective as oral NSAIDs. There is less ability to control serum levels and dosing with the topicals. The patient is not demonstrated to have any GI issue at all with NSAIDs. The patient was prescribed an oral opioids and topical NSAID concurrently. The use of the topical creams/gels does not provide the appropriate therapeutic serum levels of medications due to the inaccurate dosing performed by rubbing variable amounts of creams on areas that are not precise. The volume applied and the times per day that the creams are applied are variable and do not provide consistent serum levels consistent with effective treatment. There is no medical necessity for the addition of creams to the oral medications in the same drug classes. There is no demonstrated evidence that the topicals are more effective than generic oral medications. The prolonged use of topical Voltaren cream 1% not supported by the applicable evidence based guidelines. The continued use of topical NSAIDs for the current clinical conditions is not otherwise warranted or demonstrated to be medically necessary. The prescribed topical Voltaren topical cream or gel is not demonstrated be medically necessary.