

Case Number:	CM14-0056399		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2014	Date of Injury:	10/29/2012
Decision Date:	09/25/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/10/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/25/2014

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 42 year old male who reported an industrial injury to the back on 10/29/2012, almost two (2) years ago, attributed to the performance of his customary job tasks as a deputy sheriff reported as falling and landing on his back. The patient was treated conservatively and ultimately underwent a left L4 through S1 laminectomy and discectomy. The patient underwent post operative rehabilitation. The patient complained of low back pain. The objective findings on examination included, well healed midline scar; TTP at the lumbar paraspinal muscles; pain with terminal motion; residual weakness to the left ankle and toes. The treatment plan included the prescription of Ondansetron 8 mg #60 and Omeprazole 20 mg #120.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ondansetron ODT 8mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: General disciplinary guidelines for the practice of medicine.

Decision rationale: The treating provider provided no objective evidence to support the medical necessity of the prescribed Zofran/Ondansetron for nausea or vomiting. The prescription of Ondansetron for episodes of nausea and vomiting allegedly due to the side effects of medications is not supported with objective evidence. Zofran is typically prescribed for the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy and is not medically necessary for nausea suggested to be caused by medication side effects prescribed for the course of treatment. There is no documentation of any medications caused such side effects or the use of typical generic medications generally prescribed for nausea or vomiting. The prescription was provided without objective evidence of medication side effects or any relation to the effects of the industrial injury. There is no documentation of the failure of more common anti-emetics. The prescription of Zofran is recommended only for the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy and is not FDA approved for the use of general nausea secondary to medications or from SCS use. The use of the Zofran for the effects of the industrial injury is not supported with objective evidence that demonstrates medical necessity over conventionally prescribed anti-emetics. The patient is being prescribed Ondansetron for an off label purpose and does not meet the criteria recommended for the use of the anti-nausea medications developed for chemotherapy side effects. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for the prescribed Ondansetron 8 mg #60. Zofran: (Ondansetron) is a serotonin 5-HT₃ receptor antagonist used mainly as an antiemetic to treat nausea and vomiting, often following chemotherapy. Its effects are thought to be on both peripheral and central nerves. Ondansetron reduces the activity of the vagus nerve, which deactivates the vomiting center in the medulla oblongata, and blocks serotonin receptors in the chemoreceptor trigger zone. It has little effect on vomiting caused by motion sickness, and does not have any effect on dopamine receptors or muscarinic receptors. Given the above the request is not medically necessary.

Omeprazole DR 20mg #120: 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 anti-inflammatory medication Page(s): 67-68. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) pain chapter-medications for chronic pain; NSAIDs.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines section on anti-inflammatory medications and gastrointestinal symptoms states; "Determine if the patient is at risk for gastrointestinal events." The medical records provided for review do not provide additional details in regards to the above assessment needed for this request. No indication or rationale for gastrointestinal prophylaxis is documented in the records provided. There are no demonstrated or documented GI issues attributed to NSAIDs for this patient. The patient was prescribed Omeprazole routine for prophylaxis with the prescribed medications. The protection of the gastric lining from the chemical effects of NSAIDs is appropriately accomplished with the use of the proton pump inhibitors such as Omeprazole. The patient is not documented to be taking NSAIDs. There is no industrial indication for the use of Omeprazole due to "stomach issues," or stomach irritation. The proton pump inhibitors provide protection from medication side effects of dyspepsia or stomach discomfort brought on by NSAIDs. The use of Omeprazole

is medically necessary if the patient were prescribed conventional NSAIDs and complained of GI issues associated with NSAIDs. Whereas, 50% of patient taking NSAIDs may complain of GI upset, it is not clear that the patient was prescribed Omeprazole automatically. The prescribed opioid analgesic, not an NSAID, was accompanied by a prescription for Omeprazole without documentation of complications. There were no documented GI effects of the NSAIDs to the stomach of the patient and the Omeprazole was dispensed or prescribed routinely. The prescription of proton pump inhibitors on a long-term basis is not recommended due to the side effects of osteoporosis and diminished magnesium levels. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for the prescription for omeprazole 20 mg #120. There is no documented functional improvement with the prescribed Omeprazole. Given the above the request is not medically necessary.