

Case Number:	CM14-0070674		
Date Assigned:	07/14/2014	Date of Injury:	12/01/2004
Decision Date:	09/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/15/2014

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 Occupational Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York and North Carolina. 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 employee, a 49 year old man, claims injury 12/1/2004 when he was rear-ended while driving. He states he has resultant chronic low back and neck pain. Neck surgery has been recommended, but he refuses it. He is appealing the 5/9/2014 denial of Ultram ER 100 mg. He has complaints related to the medication, including severe constipation with resultant hemorrhoids, and sexual dysfunction.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultram ER 100 MG: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78-79.

Decision rationale: Tramadol (Ultram) is classified as a centrally acting opioid, and may be effective in managing neuropathic pain. There is no information on this request about how the medication is to be taken - e.g. amount, frequency, and duration. The criteria for opioid use would apply. Opioids should be discontinued when pain continues in the presence of intolerable side effects. They should also be discontinued when there is no overall improvement in function,

unless there are extenuating circumstances. He is an obese man (BMI 36%) who suffers from fatty liver (NASH or non-alcoholic steatohepatitis), hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. He has sexual complaints as well. Records document that his pain has not changed - there has been no improvement on the tramadol noted. Because of poor improvement in pain levels and significant side effects from the medication, opioids are not medically necessary. Furthermore, no dosage is outlined in the request for authorization. Therefore, the request of Ultram ER 100 mg is not medically necessary and appropriate.