

Case Number:	CM14-0077387		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	06/03/2012
Decision Date:	09/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/27/2014

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 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 patient is a 55-year-old with a reported date of injury of 06/03/2012. The patient has the diagnoses of left shoulder osteoarthritis, left shoulder bursitis, lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar intervertebral disc degeneration and lumbar intervertebral disc displacement. Past treatment modalities have included shockwave therapy. Per the progress reports provided by the primary treating physician dated 04/09/2014, the patient had complaints of burning bilateral shoulder pain associated with muscle spasms and radiation down the arm and burning low back pain radiating into the waist. Physical exam noted bilateral tender AC joints with decreased range of motion and positive Neer's, Hawkin's and Jobe's test in the bilateral shoulders. The lumbar exam noted tender paraspinal muscles and sciatic notches with decreased range of motion. Treatment recommendations included continuation of shockwave therapy and medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retro Compounded Medication (Capsaicin 0.025%, Flurbiprofen 15%, Tramadol 15%, Menthol 2%, Camphor 2%, Amitriptyline 4%, Dextromethorphan 15% Tramadol 20%):
Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines topical analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on topical analgesics states: Topical Analgesics, Recommended as an option as indicated below. Largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. (Namaka, 2004) These agents are applied locally to painful areas with advantages that include lack of systemic side effects, absence of drug interactions, and no need to titrate. (Colombo, 2006) Many agents are compounded as monotherapy or in combination for pain control (including NSAIDs, opioids, capsaicin, local anesthetics, antidepressants, glutamate receptor antagonists, adrenergic receptor agonist, adenosine, cannabinoids, cholinergic receptor agonists, agonists, prostanoids, bradykinin, adenosine triphosphate, biogenic amines, and nerve growth factor). (Argoff, 2006) There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. The proposed medication contains several components that are not recommended as topical analgesics per the California MTUS including amitriptyline and tramadol. Because the requested topical contains multiple components that are not recommended the requested medication is not medically necessary.