

Case Number:	CM14-0082360		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	06/07/2011
Decision Date:	08/27/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/02/2014

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 New Jersey. 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 worker is a 43 year old female who was injured on 6/7/11. She was diagnosed with sacroiliac sprain/strain, patellar tendinitis, knee and leg sprain, left leg sciatica, lumbago, plantar fasciitis, left knee chondromalacia patella, achilles tendinitis, and ankle sprain. She was treated with physical therapy, chiropractor visits, medications, including Neurontin (which she notices minimal numbness relief but no change in burning pain related to her neuropathy), and steroid injections. An MRI of the lumbar spine was normal on 1/3/14, similar to a previous MRI done on 4/19/12. She was seen on 4/14/14 complaining of his left knee pain, left ankle pain, and left leg pain with numbness. Physical examination revealed positive straight leg raise test, decreased sensation along L4 dermatome, and hypersensitivity of the L4 dermatome as it reaches more distally in her legs. Also, there was tenderness of the lower lumbar spinal area, the left knee along the joint line, and the left ankle anteromedially. Neurontin and tramadol as well as Pennsaid was to be continued. Later, on 4/21/14, she reported burning sciatica pain and occasional numbness of his left foot. Physical examination revealed tenderness of the piriformis muscles bilaterally, and tenderness over sacroiliac joints bilaterally. The worker was recommended by her treating physician acupuncture and a trial of Lyrica for her neuropathic pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Prescription of Lyrica 75mg #60: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-epilepsy drugs Page(s): 16-22.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines state that antiepilepsy drugs (or anti-convulsants) are recommended as first line therapy for neuropathic pain as long as there is at least a 30% reduction in pain. If less than 30% reduction in pain is observed with use, then switching to another medication or combining with another agent is advised. Documentation of pain relief, improvement in function, and side effects is required for continual use. Preconception counseling is advised for women of childbearing years before use, and this must be documented. In the case of this worker, she had been using Neurontin with minimal results, according to the treating physician, and a request for a trial of Lyrica was made to help treat her neuropathic pain. This seems reasonable and appropriate. The previous reviewer stated that there was not enough documented evidence of neuropathy, but after reviewing the notes available for review, there certainly is enough evidence subjectively and objectively to suggest she has neuropathy. MRI findings suggesting of radiculopathy is not required for the diagnosis of neuropathy as the nerves can be affected more distally to the spine, which is likely the case with this worker. Therefore the request for Lyrica 75mg #60 is medically necessary and appropriate.