

Case Number:	CM14-0084331		
Date Assigned:	09/05/2014	Date of Injury:	06/24/2008
Decision Date:	10/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/10/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/06/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 48-year-old male with a 6/24/08 date of injury. At the time (5/8/14) of the Decision for Tramadol ER 150mg #30, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain and swelling of right foot) and objective (tenderness to palpation over lumbar and right peroneal muscle) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar disc bulges, lumbar spine radiculopathy, lumbar facet joint pain, reflex sympathetic dystrophy, and chronic right foot pain), and treatment to date (medications (including ongoing treatment with Tramadol, Diclofenac, Naproxen, Neurontin, and Omeprazole)). Medical reports identify that patient has functional improvement and pain relief with medications including Tramadol. There is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; and moderate to severe pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol ER 150mg #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80, 113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Opioids. In addition, specifically regarding Tramadol, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline identifies documentation of moderate to severe pain and Tramadol used as a second-line treatment (alone or in combination with first-line drugs), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Tramadol. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar disc bulges, lumbar spine radiculopathy, lumbar facet joint pain, reflex sympathetic dystrophy, and chronic right foot pain. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing treatment with Tramadol; and Tramadol is used as a second line treatment . Furthermore, given documentation of functional improvement and pain relief with Tramadol, there is documentation of functional benefit and an increase in activity tolerance as a result of Tramadol use to date. However, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, despite documentation of pain, there is no (clear) documentation of moderate to severe pain. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Tramadol ER 150mg #30 is not medically necessary.