

Case Number:	CM14-0145099		
Date Assigned:	09/12/2014	Date of Injury:	07/06/2012
Decision Date:	07/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/11/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/08/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:
 State(s) of Licensure: New Jersey, Alabama, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular Medicine

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 injured worker is a 49 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 07/06/2012. Medical records provided by the treating physician did not indicate the injured worker's mechanism of injury. The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain to the shoulder, lumbago, bursitis of the right shoulder, radiculopathy in the lumbar spine, and other affections of the shoulder region not elsewhere classified. Treatment and diagnostic studies to date have included a medication regimen and laboratory studies. In a progress note dated 07/15/2014 the treating physician reports complaints of unresolved chronic pain with an examination that was revealing for a positive impingement test, loss of lordotic curvature, and substitution of the hip flexors. The injured worker's current medication regimen included Tramadol that was used for breakthrough pain and Ibuprofen, but the documentation provided did not indicate the injured worker's pain level as rated on a pain scale prior to use of his medication regimen and after use of his medication regimen to indicate the effects with the use of Tramadol. Also, the documentation provided did not indicate if the injured worker experienced any functional improvement with use of Tramadol. The treating physician requested Tramadol 50mg twice a day with a quantity of 60 for pain uncontrolled by other methods.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol 50mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use Page(s): 80.

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

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Ultram (Tramadol) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. Although, Tramadol may be needed to help with the patient pain, there is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement from its previous use. There is no clear documentation of the efficacy/safety of previous use of tramadol. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the patient with her medications. Therefore, the prescription of Tramadol 50mg #60 is not medically necessary.