

Case Number:	CM14-0171929		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2014	Date of Injury:	07/26/2013
Decision Date:	01/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/03/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/17/2014

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 Practice 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 51-year-old with a reported date of injury of 7/26/91-07/26/2013. The mechanism of injury is not defined. The patient has the diagnoses of lumbosacral sprain/strain, herniated nucleus pulposus L5/S1, left S1 radiculopathy, facet arthropathy and right knee arthralgia. Previous treatment modalities have included lumbar epidural steroid injections. Per the progress notes provided for review from the requesting physician dated 09/18/2014, the patient had complaints of constant lumbosacral pain and right knee pain. The physical exam noted decreased lumbosacral range of motion. The treatment plan recommendations included continuation of medications, follow-up with [REDACTED] and home exercise.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retro Naproxen 550mg #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) Page(s): 67, 68, 73.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAID Page(s): 65-69.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on NSAID therapy states: Recommended at the lowest dose for the shortest period in patients with moderate

to severe pain. Acetaminophen may be considered for initial therapy for patients with mild to moderate pain, and in particular, for those with gastrointestinal, cardiovascular or renovascular risk factors. NSAIDs appear to be superior to acetaminophen, particularly for patients with moderate to severe pain. There is no evidence to recommend one drug in this class over another based on efficacy. In particular, there appears to be no difference between traditional NSAIDs and COX-2 NSAIDs in terms of pain relief. The main concern of selection is based on adverse effects. COX-2 NSAIDs have fewer GI side effects at the risk of increased cardiovascular side effects, although the FDA has concluded that long-term clinical trials are best interpreted to suggest that cardiovascular risk occurs with all NSAIDs and is a class effect (with naproxyn being the safest drug). There is no evidence of long-term effectiveness for pain or function. (Chen, 2008) (Laine, 2008). This medication is recommended for the shortest period of time and at the lowest dose possible. The shortest period is not defined in the California MTUS. The patient has experienced no side effects and has no primary gastrointestinal or cardiac diseases listed. The dosing of this medication is within recommendations per the California MTUS. For these reasons criteria set forth for the use of the medication have been met and therefore the request is medically necessary.

Retro Prilosec 20mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk Page(s): 68-69.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAID Page(s): 68.

Decision rationale: TThe California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on NSAID therapy and proton pump inhibitors (PPI) states:The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on NSAID therapy and proton pump inhibitors (PPI) states:Recommend with precautions as indicated below:Clinicians should weight the indications for NSAIDs against both GI and cardiovascular riskfactors.Determine if the patient is at risk for gastrointestinal events: (1) age > 65 years; (2) history of peptic ulcer, GI bleeding or perforation; (3) concurrent use of ASA, corticosteroids, and/or an anticoagulant; or (4) high dose/multiple NSAID (e.g., NSAID + low-dose ASA). Recent studies tend to show that H. Pylori does not act synergistically with NSAIDS to develop gastro duodenal lesions.Recommendations:Patients with no risk factor and no cardiovascular disease: Non-selective NSAIDs OK (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.)Patients at intermediate risk for gastrointestinal events and no cardiovascular disease:(1) A non-selective NSAID with either a PPI (Proton Pump Inhibitor, for example, 20 mg omeprazole daily) or misoprostol (200 g four times daily) or (2) a Cox-2 selective agent. Long-term PPI use (> 1 year) has been shown to increase the risk of hip fracture (adjusted odds ratio 1.44). Patients at high risk for gastrointestinal events with no cardiovascular disease: A Cox-2 selective agent plus a PPI if absolutely necessary.There is no documentation provided that places this patient at intermediate or high risk that would justify the use of a PPI. There is no mention of current gastrointestinal or cardiovascular disease. For these reasons the criteria set forth above per the California MTUS for the use of this medication has not been met. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.

Retro Tramadol 50mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol (Ultram); Opioids, criteria for use; Weaning of Medicat.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 76-84.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (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. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: 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 nonadherent) 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 for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids: (a) If the patient has returned to work (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain (Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004). Chronic back pain: Appears to be efficacious but limited for short-term pain relief, and long term efficacy is unclear (>16 weeks), but also appears limited. Failure to respond to a time limited course of opioids has led to the suggestion of reassessment and consideration of alternative therapy. There is no evidence to recommend one opioid over another. In patients taking opioids for back pain, the prevalence of lifetime substance use disorders has ranged from 36% to 56% (a statistic limited by poor study design). Limited information indicated that up to one-fourth of patients who receive opioids exhibit aberrant medication-taking behavior. (Martell-Annals, 2007) (Chou, 2007) The long-term

use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. The most recent progress reports do not mention the patient's status. There is no included objective improvement in pain such as VAS scores. There is no mention of objective functional improvement. For these reasons the criteria set forth above of ongoing and continued used of opioids have not been met. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.