

Case Number:	CM14-0193664		
Date Assigned:	12/01/2014	Date of Injury:	02/04/2003
Decision Date:	01/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/19/2014

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 Internal Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 62 year old male with a date of injury of 02/04/2003. He had a back injury and had a laminectomy with L4-L5 fusion. Subsequently he had lumbar hardware removal. The last lumbar MRI was on 10/04/2010. On 08/19/2014 there was no change in his back pain. He had left foot numbness. He ambulated with a cane. He was taking Ambien 10 mg and was prescribed 30 tablets with 2 refills. He was also taking two muscle relaxants - Baclofen and Zanaflex and was prescribed a month with refills. On 10/14/2014 he was taking Ambien 10 mg HS PRN and was prescribed 30 tablets with 3 refills. He was also taking two muscle relaxants - Baclofen and Zanaflex. He was prescribed a month of each with a refill. He had low back pain with left lower extremity pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

90 Tablets of Baclofen 20mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants (for pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants Page(s): 63 - 66.

Decision rationale: According to the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, MTUS (Effective July 18, 2009) page 63, muscle relaxants (for pain) "Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (Van Tulder, 1998) (Van Tulder, 2003) (Van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. (Homik, 2004) Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. Drugs with the most limited published evidence in terms of clinical effectiveness include chlorzoxazone, methocarbamol, dantrolene and baclofen. (Chou, 2004)" According to a recent review in American Family Physician, skeletal muscle relaxants are the most widely prescribed drug class for musculoskeletal conditions (18.5% of prescriptions), and the most commonly prescribed antispasmodic agents are carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine, metaxalone, and methocarbamol, but despite their popularity, skeletal muscle relaxants should not be the primary drug class of choice for musculoskeletal conditions. Baclofen is recommended only for the treatment of spasticity and muscle spasm from multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury and the patient has neither of these conditions. He is also taking another muscle relaxant - Zanaflex. The continued long term use of Baclofen is not consistent with MTUS guidelines.

30 Tablets of Ambien 10mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain, Insomnia treatment, Non-Benzodiazepine sedative-hypnotics

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: FDA approved package insert, Ambien.

Decision rationale: The FDA has noted that Ambien is safe and effective treatment for up to 35 days of use. This patient has been prescribed Ambien for months - at least 6 months - and this is experimental and investigational treatment. The continued long term use of Ambien is not consistent with the FDA approved indications in the package insert.