

Case Number:	CM15-0007452		
Date Assigned:	01/26/2015	Date of Injury:	09/03/2002
Decision Date:	03/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/09/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/13/2015

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: California, Indiana, New York
Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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 47 year old female who suffered a work related injury on 09/03/02. Per the physician notes from 12/08/14, she continues to experience neck pain and bilateral upper extremity pain, as well as numbness and tingling. Pain is rated at 8.5/10 and she can no longer work. The treatment plan includes, Ultram, Lyrica, Chiropractic sessions, and pain psychology evaluation. On 01/19/15, the Claims Administrator non-certified the Lyrica, citing MTUS guidelines. Lyrica was subsequently appealed for Independent Medical Review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Prescription of Lyrica 50mg #60: 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 (Chronic)

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-convulsants Page(s): 16-18. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation pain section, Anti-convulsants

Decision rationale: Pursuant to the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines and the Official Disability Guidelines, Lyrica 50 mg #60 is not medically necessary. Lyrica is recommended in neuropathic pain conditions and fibromyalgia, but not for acute pain. Lyrica is an anticonvulsant. Lyrica is associated with a modest increase in the number of patients experiencing meaningful pain reduction. In this case, the injured workers working diagnoses are chronic neck pain; multilevel cervical DDD; chronic bilateral upper extremity pain with carpal tunnel surgical releases; and status post bilateral ulnar nerve surgical release at the elbows. Subjectively, the injured worker complains of neck pain and bilateral upper extremity pain. She has numbness and tingling in both hands. Cervical magnetic resonance imaging scan from November 4, 2014 showed multilevel generated this disease. EMGs of the bilateral upper extremities from May 22, 2012 were normal except for chronic mild neuropathic changes in the right flexor carpi ulnaris that could be residual from previous ulnar surgery of the right elbow. Objectively, there is moderate cervical paraspinal tenderness, right greater than left. Range of motion is decreased. There is tenderness palpation to both wrists and forearms. There are two clinical progress notes in the medical record. The oldest is dated October 13, 2014 and the injured worker was taking Lyrica at that time. The most recent progress notes dated December 8, 2014. The two follow-up progress notes do not contain evidence of objective functional improvement with which to gauge Lyrica's efficacy. Consequently, absent clinical documentation with objective functional improvement to gauge the efficacy of Lyrica, Lyrica 50 mg #60 is not medically necessary.