

Case Number:	CM15-0102938		
Date Assigned:	06/05/2015	Date of Injury:	04/15/2005
Decision Date:	07/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/01/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/28/2015

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
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 65 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/15/05. He reported bilateral knee pain, bilateral foot pain, and low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar degenerative intervertebral disc. Treatment to date has included 2 left knee surgeries, right knee surgery, bilateral foot surgery, a home exercise program, chiropractic treatment, acupuncture, TENS, and medication. The injured worker had been taking Ultram since at least 5/17/10. Currently, the injured worker complains of lumbar pain. The treating physician requested authorization for Ultracet 37.5/325mg #30 with 2 refills quantity 30, Ultram 50mg #30 with 2 refills, and Ultracet 37.5/325mg #30 with 2 refills quantity 60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultracet 37.5/325mg qd prn for moderate pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain Chapter (Online version).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Ultracet 37.5/325mg qd prn for moderate pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 30 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Ultram 50mg qd prn for mild pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain Chapter (Online version).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Pain symptoms and clinical findings remain unchanged for this chronic injury. Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or returned to work status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury. In addition, submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the specific indication to support for chronic opioid use without acute flare-up, new injuries, or progressive clinical deficits to support for chronic opioids outside recommendations of the guidelines. The Ultram 50mg qd prn for mild pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Ultracet 37.5/325mg qd prn for moderate pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain Chapter (Online version).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Ultracet 37.5/325mg qd prn for moderate pain #30 with 2 refills qty: 60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.