

Case Number:	CM15-0103412		
Date Assigned:	06/05/2015	Date of Injury:	08/23/2009
Decision Date:	07/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/21/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/29/2015

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: Texas, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 57-year-old female with an August 23, 2009 date of injury. A progress note dated May 4, 2015 documents subjective findings (chronic neck, back, and shoulder pain; pain rated at a level of 10/10 without medications and 5/10 with meds), objective findings (walks slowly with a cane with a mildly antalgic gait), and current diagnoses (cervical degenerative disc disease; adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder; thoracic pain; chronic lower back pain). Treatments to date have included medications, magnetic resonance imaging of the cervical spine (September 21, 2009; showed multilevel degenerative disc disease and varying degrees of left neuroforaminal narrowing), shoulder surgery, electromyogram (November 11, 2009; showed normal findings), and magnetic resonance imaging of the lumbar spine (April 15, 2010; showed disc desiccations at L1-L2 and L4-L5 and a bulging disc at this level). The medical record identifies that medications help control the pain. The treating physician documented a plan of care that included Percocet. The medication list includes Percocet, Nexium, Colace and Trazodone. The patient has had urine drug screen test on 7/2/14 that was consistent for Percocet.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 prescription for Percocet 10/325mg #180: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use: page 76-80.

Decision rationale: Percocet contains acetaminophen and oxycodone which is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals". The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function, continuing review of the overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs". The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. The level of pain control with lower potency opioids and other non opioid medications, without the use of Percocet, was not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The request for the of prescription for Percocet 10/325mg #180 is not medically necessary or established for this patient, given the records submitted and the guidelines referenced. If this medication is discontinued, the medication should be tapered, according to the discretion of the treating provider, to prevent withdrawal symptoms.