

Case Number:	CM15-0104919		
Date Assigned:	06/09/2015	Date of Injury:	05/16/2012
Decision Date:	07/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/01/2015

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: North Carolina

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:

The injured worker is a 54-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/16/12. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic pain due to trauma, sleep disturbances, thoracic sprain/strain, lumbago, cervicalgia and carpal tunnel syndrome. Treatment to date has included oral medications including Nabumetone, Flexeril and Tylenol with codeine; topical Medrox patch, transforaminal epidural steroid injections, physical therapy, lumbar support belt and home exercise program. (MRI) magnetic resonance imaging of lumbar spine performed on 9/10/12 revealed L4-5 and L5-S1 degenerative changes, (MRI) magnetic resonance imaging of thoracic spine performed the same day revealed neuroforaminal stenosis at T2-3, T1-2 and C7-T1. Currently, the injured worker complains of persistent low back pain, improved since previous visit. It is noted the transforaminal epidural steroid injection provided 50% improvement to pain symptoms and Medrox has been more effective when compared to other topical analgesics. Physical exam noted limited range of motion to cervical spine, tenderness to palpation bilaterally at mid thoracic level with guarding and moderate tenderness over paralumbar extensors and facet joints with mild to moderately limited range of motion of lumbar spine due to pain/stiffness.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Medrox patch 0.0375-5-20% #6 boxes: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines topical analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on topical analgesics states: Recommended as an option as indicated below. Largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. (Namaka, 2004) These agents are applied locally to painful areas with advantages that include lack of systemic side effects, absence of drug interactions, and no need to titrate. (Colombo, 2006) Many agents are compounded as monotherapy or in combination for pain control (including NSAIDs, opioids, capsaicin, local anesthetics, antidepressants, glutamate receptor antagonists, "adrenergic receptor agonist, adenosine, cannabinoids, cholinergic receptor agonists," agonists, prostanoids, bradykinin, adenosine triphosphate, biogenic amines, and nerve growth factor). (Argoff, 2006) There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. The requested medication contains ingredients, which are not indicated per the California MTUS for topical analgesic use. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.