

Case Number:	CM15-0106703		
Date Assigned:	06/11/2015	Date of Injury:	01/14/2009
Decision Date:	07/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/03/2015

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 42 year old male patient who sustained an industrial injury on 01/14/2009. Current diagnoses include status post L5-S1 laminectomy/ discectomy for recurrent free fragment with recent flare up, L5-S1 disc desiccation, and L4-L5 moderate posterior central disc tear. Per the doctor's note dated 5/14/2015 he presented for post operative follow up with complaints of a slight mild twinge in the left lower back. Pain level was not included. Physical examination was positive for decreased reflexes in the bilateral knee and ankle, no other abnormalities were noted. The medications list includes percocet, flexeril, latuda (lurasidone), lamictal, klonopin and lyrica. He has undergone lumbar surgery on 02/26/2015 and right shoulder surgery. He has had lumbar MRI for this injury. He has epidural injections, acupuncture, physical therapy, chiropractor treatments, and aqua therapy. The treatment plan included requests for Percocet and Valium, physical therapy, and return in 4 weeks. Disputed treatments include Percocet.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Percocet 5/325mg #180: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 78-80, 92, 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
Criteria for use of Opioids Page 76-80.

Decision rationale: This is a request for Percocet, which is an opioid analgesic. It contains acetaminophen and oxycodone. According to the cited guidelines, "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 that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. The 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 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 objective functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of the overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by the cited guidelines 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. Response to lower potency opioids for chronic pain is not specified in the records provided. A recent urine drug screen report is not specified in the records provided. This patient did not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The request for Percocet 5/325mg #180 is not medically necessary or established for this patient. If this medication is discontinued, the medication should be tapered, according to the discretion of the treating provider, to prevent withdrawal symptoms.