

Case Number:	CM15-0107028		
Date Assigned:	07/17/2015	Date of Injury:	11/16/2004
Decision Date:	08/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/06/2015
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: California, Arizona, Maryland
Certification(s)/Specialty: Psychiatry

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 57-year-old male who sustained an industrial on 11/16/04. Progress report dated 4/10/15 reports medication management for persistent symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress related medical complaints related to industrial injury. Current combination of medications and related counseling has helped to improve symptoms. Plan of care is to continue current treatment and request authorization for medications prescribed today, cymbalta, lunesta, abilify, xanax and viagra. Follow up every 2 months for the next year.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

30 tablets of Lunesta 3mg with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Mental illness & Stress: Insomnia treatment (2015).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Stress and Mental Illness/ Insomnia treatment; Eszopiclone/Lunesta.

Decision rationale: ODG states "Lunesta not recommended for long-term use, but recommended for short-term use. Recommend limiting use of hypnotics to three weeks maximum in the first two months of injury only, and discourage use in the chronic phase. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers, and anti-anxiety agents are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. They can be habit-forming, and they may impair function and memory more than opioid pain relievers. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term. In this study, Eszopiclone (Lunesta) had a Hazard ratio for death of 30.62 (C.I., 12.90 to 72.72), compared to zolpidem at 4.82 (4.06 to 5.74). In general, receiving hypnotic prescriptions was associated with greater than a threefold increased hazard of death even when prescribed less than 18 pills/year. (Kripke, 2012) The FDA has lowered the recommended starting dose of eszopiclone (Lunesta) from 2 mg to 1 mg for both men and women. Previously recommended doses can cause impairment to driving skills, memory, and coordination as long as 11 hours after the drug is taken. Despite these long-lasting effects, patients were often unaware they were impaired." The request for 30 tablets of Lunesta 3mg with 2 refills is excessive and not medically necessary, as medications for insomnia such as Lunesta are not indicated for long-term use. The request for a three-month supply of the medication is not clinically indicated.