

Case Number:	CM15-0130115		
Date Assigned:	07/16/2015	Date of Injury:	03/01/1999
Decision Date:	08/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/06/2015

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:

This 61 year old female sustained an industrial injury to multiple body parts including the low back, neck, bilateral wrists, bilateral arms and bilateral knees after a fall on 3/1/99. Previous treatment included right knee arthroplasty, left knee arthroscopy, physical therapy, epidural steroid injections, knee brace, wrist splints, home exercise and medications. Magnetic resonance imaging lumbar spine (1/21/15) showed anterolisthesis with diffuse disc bulges, facet hypertrophy and central canal stenosis. In a pain management follow up report dated 5/18/15, the injured worker continued to complain ongoing low back pain with lower extremity symptoms, bilateral knee pain, neck pain, headaches, depression and anxiety. The injured worker also complained of hearing problems and rectovaginal fistulas. The injured worker had difficulty doing most of her activities of daily living including any sustained standing, walking or using stairs. The injured worker used a cane for ambulation. Current treatment consisted of medication management with multiple oral medications including Percocet, Neurontin, Flexeril, Zomig, Prevacid, Amitiza and Senna. Current diagnoses included intractable lumbar pain, lumbar spine radiculopathy, diffuse chronic myofascial pain, history of total knee replacement with chronic pain, history of left knee arthroscopy, chronic cervical spine pain with radiculopathy, bilateral shoulder and elbow tendinosis, history of upper extremity fractures with open reduction internal fixation, chronic headaches, depression, anxiety, rectovaginal fistula and hearing loss. The treatment plan included continuing current medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Neurontin 300mg #120: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs); Neurontin (gabapentin) Page(s): 16-19.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines gabapentin Page(s): 18.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on Neurontin states: Gabapentin (Neurontin, Gabarone, generic available) has been shown to be effective for treatment of diabetic painful neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia and has been considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. (Backonja, 2002) (ICSI, 2007) (Knotkova, 2007) (Eisenberg, 2007) (Attal, 2006) This RCT concluded that gabapentin monotherapy appears to be efficacious for the treatment of pain and sleep interference associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy and exhibits positive effects on mood and quality of life. (Backonja, 1998) It has been given FDA approval for treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia. The number needed to treat (NNT) for overall neuropathic pain is 4. It has a more favorable side-effect profile than Carbamazepine, with a number needed to harm of 2.5. (Wiffen2-Cochrane, 2005) (Zaremba, 2006) Gabapentin in combination with morphine has been studied for treatment of diabetic neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia. When used in combination the maximum tolerated dosage of both drugs was lower than when each was used as a single agent and better analgesia occurred at lower doses of each. (Gilron-NEJM, 2005) Recommendations involving combination therapy require further study. The patient has the diagnosis of neuropathic pain in the form of radiculopathy. Therefore the request is medically necessary and approved.