

Case Number:	CM15-0143329		
Date Assigned:	08/04/2015	Date of Injury:	12/31/1999
Decision Date:	09/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/23/2015

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: Arizona, 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:

The injured worker is a 56 year old male who sustained an industrial/work injury on 12-31-99. He reported an initial complaint of pain in the upper and lower back that radiated to the lower extremities. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical facet arthropathy, cervical radiculopathy, lumbar facet arthropathy, lumbar radiculopathy, chronic pain, and cervical fusion surgery times 2. Treatment to date includes medication and diagnostics. MRI results were reported on 8-8-13 and 7-16-12. Currently, the injured worker complained of continued low back pain radiating to the lower extremities that was aggravated by activities. Per the primary physician's report (PR-2) on 6-22-15, exam noted tenderness with palpation and lumbar spasms, sensory loss in a right lower extremity distribution, decreased strength at L4-S1 distribution, positive straight leg raise was positive on right at 70 degrees. The requested treatments include Zanaflex 4mg #60 for the lumbar and cervical spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Zanaflex 4mg #60 for the lumbar and cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants (for pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines muscle relaxants Page(s): 68.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, Zanaflex is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. It falls under the category of muscle relaxants. According to the MTUS guidelines, muscle relaxants are to be used with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic low back pain. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most low back pain cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. In this case, the claimant had been on Zanaflex in combination with NSAIDs and opioids for over 6 months. Continued and chronic use of muscle relaxants /antispasmodics is not medically necessary. Therefore, Zanaflex is not medically necessary.