

Case Number:	CM15-0166335		
Date Assigned:	09/04/2015	Date of Injury:	09/11/2012
Decision Date:	10/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/24/2015

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, District of Columbia, Maryland
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

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 26 year old right hand dominant male who sustained an industrial injury on 9-11-12. Diagnoses are status post right hand penetrating injury with crush and laceration-dorsal aspect, right fourth and fifth fingers neuropraxia, right little finger laceration, right lateral epicondylitis-status post Cortisone injection x3 on 10-23-14, 1-9-15, 6-25-15, status post right dorsal hand exploration, debridement, tenolysis, and repair EDM (extensor digiti minimi) 9-12-12, right carpal tunnel syndrome 3-14-14, right ulnar neuropathy Guyon's canal; electro-diagnostic study, status post digitorum communis-5 EDM (extensor digiti minimi) tenolysis with tendon transfer 8-13-14, status post right carpal tunnel release, wrist flexor tenosynovitis, release ulnar nerve Guyon's canal 11-19-14, and right cubital tunnel syndrome status post Cortisone injection x1 5-14-15. In an orthopedic hand-plastic and reconstructive specialist progress report dated 7-23-15, the physician notes pain to the lateral epicondylar region, increased pain with rotation of the forearm, positive provocative testing for ulnar neuropathy cubital tunnel, and tenderness of A-1 pulley right index finger. Previous treatment noted includes a Functional Capacity Evaluation, nerve conduction studies-bilateral upper extremities, Cortisone injections, hand therapy and surgery. A course of acupuncture was recommended. His current medication is Diclofenac Sodium ER. Work status is to return to modified duties with limitations and restrictions for 6 weeks. The requested treatment is HMPC2-Flurbiprofen 20%-Baclofen 10%- Dexamethasone Micro 0.2%-Hyaluronic Acid 0.2%, 240 gm quantity of 1 and HNPC1-Amitriptyline 10%-Gabapentin 10%-Bupivacaine 5%-Hyaluronic Acid 0.2%, 240gm, quantity of 1.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

HMPC2-flurbiprofen 20%/Baclofen 10%/Dexamethasone Micro 0.2%/ Hyaluronic Acid 0.2% 240gm quantity 1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Topical Analgesics.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS with regard to Flurbiprofen (p 112), "These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. (Mason, 2004) Indications: Osteoarthritis and tendinitis, in particular, that of the knee and elbow or other joints that are amenable to topical treatment: Recommended for short-term use (4-12 weeks). There is little evidence to utilize topical NSAIDs for treatment of osteoarthritis of the spine, hip or shoulder." Flurbiprofen may be indicated. Per MTUS p 113 with regard to topical baclofen, "Baclofen: Not recommended. There is currently one Phase III study of Baclofen-Amitriptyline-Ketamine gel in cancer patients for treatment of chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy. There is no peer-reviewed literature to support the use of topical baclofen. Other muscle relaxants: There is no evidence for use of any other muscle relaxant as a topical product." Baclofen is not indicated. The CA MTUS, ODG, National Guidelines Clearinghouse, and ACOEM provide no evidence-based recommendations regarding the topical application of dexamethasone or hyaluronic acid. It is the opinion of this IMR reviewer that a lack of endorsement, a lack of mention, inherently implies a lack of recommendation, or a status equivalent to "not recommended". Since this component is not medically indicated, then the overall product is not indicated per MTUS as outlined below. Note the statement on page 111: Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Regarding the use of multiple medications, MTUS p 60 states "Only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. Analgesic medications should show effects within 1 to 3 days, and the analgesic effect of antidepressants should occur within 1 week. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. (Mens, 2005) The recent AHRQ review of comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesics for osteoarthritis concluded that each of the analgesics was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks, and no currently available analgesic was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others." Therefore, it would be optimal to trial each medication individually. As multiple agents are not recommended, the request is not medically necessary.

HNPC1- Amitriptyline 10%/Gabapentin 10%/ Bupivacaine 5%/Hyaluronic Acid 0.2% 240gm quantity 1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Topical Analgesics.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS p 113 with regard to topical gabapentin: "Not recommended. There is no peer-reviewed literature to support use." Note the statement on page 111: Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. The MTUS is silent on the use of topical Bupivacaine, however, topical lidocaine is only recommended for neuropathic pain after there has been evidence of a trial of first-line therapy (tri-cyclic or SNRI anti-depressants or an AED such as gabapentin or Lyrica). There is no documentation that the injured worker has failed trial of these first-line therapies. Per the article "Topical Analgesics in the Management of Acute and Chronic Pain" published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings (Vol 88, Issue 2, p 195-205), "Studies in healthy volunteers demonstrated that topical amitriptyline at concentrations of 50 and 100 mmol/L produced a significant analgesic effect ($P < .05$) when compared with placebo and was associated with transient increases in tactile and mechanical nociceptive thresholds." Amitriptyline may be indicated. The CA MTUS, ODG, National Guidelines Clearinghouse, and ACOEM provide no evidence-based recommendations regarding the topical application of hyaluronic acid. It is the opinion of this IMR reviewer that a lack of endorsement, a lack of mention, inherently implies a lack of recommendation, or a status equivalent to "not recommended". Regarding the use of multiple medications, MTUS p 60 states "Only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. Analgesic medications should show effects within 1 to 3 days, and the analgesic effect of antidepressants should occur within 1 week. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. (Mens, 2005) The recent AHRQ review of comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesics for osteoarthritis concluded that each of the analgesics was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks, and no currently available analgesic was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others." Therefore, it would be optimal to trial each medication individually. As gabapentin is not recommended, the compound is not recommended. The request is not medically necessary.