

Case Number:	CM15-0168931		
Date Assigned:	09/09/2015	Date of Injury:	09/18/2014
Decision Date:	10/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/27/2015

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:

The injured worker is a 57 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9-18-14. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar sprain, lumbar neuritis and hip sprain. Treatment to date has included oral medications including Fexmid (since at least 11-21-14), Neurontin, Prilosec and Naprosyn and Ultram; physical therapy and activity modifications. Lumbar x-ray performed on 3-10-15 noted scattered degenerative disc disease and (MRI) magnetic resonance imaging of lumbar spine performed on 3-10-15 revealed multilevel degenerative disc disease with bulging discs and annular tears, scattered neural foraminal narrowing bilaterally and lower lumbar joint facet osteoarthritis. Currently on 7-8-15, the injured worker complains of chronic pain inn lower back extending into bilateral hips, calves and lower legs. He rated the pain 6 out of 10 on 6-12-15 and 7 out of 10 on 7-8-15; he notes with current medications he is able to perform activities of daily living and reports the pain is increased 2-3 points without the medications. Work status is unclear. Physical exam performed on 6-12-15 and 7-8-15 revealed decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine secondary to pain with lumbar tenderness and paraspinous muscle spasming. A request for authorization was submitted on 7-14-15 for Fexmid 7.5mg #60, Neurontin 600mg #90, Tramadol 150mg #60 and laboratory studies.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Fexmed 7.5mg #60: 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): Muscle relaxants (for pain).

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on muscle relaxants states: Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (Van Tulder, 1998) (van Tulder, 2003) (van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP 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. (Homik, 2004) (Chou, 2004) This medication is not intended for long-term use per the California MTUS. The medication has not been prescribed for the flare-up of chronic low back pain. This is not an approved use for the medication. For these reasons, criteria for the use of this medication have not been met. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.