

Case Number:	CM15-0181848		
Date Assigned:	09/23/2015	Date of Injury:	10/11/2008
Decision Date:	10/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/15/2015

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 67 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 10-11-2008. Current diagnoses include anxiety disorder and depressive disorder. Report dated 07-23-2015 noted that the injured worker presented with complaints that included physical pain. Current psychiatric complaints included anxiety, tension, and irritability which are currently reduced, depression is reduced, memory and concentration are somewhat impaired, appetite and weight are low, energy level is low, sociability is low, insomnia is reduced. Mental status examination performed on 07-23-2015 revealed mood and affect are somewhat less tense and dysphoric, occasional smiling, no laughing, or weeping and thought content and process were less tense and dysphoric. Previous treatments included medications, surgical intervention, epidural steroid injection, and spinal cord stimulator implantation. The treatment plan included prescribing Wellbutrin, Ativan, and Ambien, start cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, and phone consultation in four weeks. Phone consultation dated 08-20-2015 noted that the injured worker is mentally better with good response to treatment, no new symptoms or side effects. Treatment plan included prescribing Wellbutrin, Ativan, and Ambien, start cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, and phone consultation in eight weeks. The injured worker has been prescribed Ativan and Ambien since at least 07-23-2015. Request for authorization dated 08-20-2015, included requests for bupropion, Ativan, and Ambien. The utilization review dated 08-24-2015, non-certified the request for Ativan 2 mg #60 with 1 refill, and modified the request for Ambien 10 mg #30 with 1 refill.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ativan 2 mg #60 with 1 refill: 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): Benzodiazepines.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on benzodiazepines states: Benzodiazepines: Not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Most guidelines limit use to 4 weeks. Their range of action includes sedative/hypnotic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and muscle relaxant. Chronic benzodiazepines are the treatment of choice in very few conditions. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. A more appropriate treatment for anxiety disorder is an antidepressant. Tolerance to anticonvulsant and muscle relaxant effects occurs within weeks. (Baillargeon, 2003) (Ashton, 2005) The chronic long-term use of this class of medication is recommended in very few conditions per the California MTUS. There is no evidence however of all failure of first line agent for the treatment of anxiety or Insomnia in the provided documentation. For this reason the request is not medically necessary.

Ambien 10 mg #30 with 1 refill: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) ambien.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS and the ACOEM do not specifically address the requested medication. PER the ODG: Zolpidem is a prescription short-acting non-benzodiazepine hypnotic approved for the short-term treatment of insomnia. Proper sleep hygiene is critical to the individual with chronic pain. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers and anti-anxiety medications are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term. The medication is not intended for use greater than 6 weeks. There is no notation or rationale given for longer use in the provided progress reports. There is no documentation of other preferred long-term insomnia intervention choices being tried and failed. For these reasons the request is not medically necessary.