

Case Number:	CM15-0189936		
Date Assigned:	10/02/2015	Date of Injury:	09/17/2014
Decision Date:	11/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/28/2015

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 44 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 9-17-14. The impression is noted as chronic low back pain. Previous treatment includes physical therapy, MRI lumbar spine 2-19-15, Lidocaine Gel, home exercise, and steroid injection. In a visit note dated 8-12-15, the physician reports bilateral sacroiliac steroid injections given on 6-23-15 have continued to give 20% decreased low back pain, which was initially decreased to 50% and is now down to 20%. He notes sitting is not as painful and he can tolerate 45 minutes when pain is rated at 5 out of 10. He is currently attending physical therapy. He has Lidocaine gel which also allows for sitting for longer periods without significant pain. It is noted that when he returns to full duty he will need a standing desk. Physical exam dated 7-9-15 reveals lumbar spine range of motion is flexion 90 degrees, extension 30 degrees, bilateral side bending 20 degrees, bilateral rotation 45 degrees, lean to the side felt 1-2+ out of 4 pain contra-laterally, and 1+ tenderness over the distal sacroiliac joints is noted. The MRI of the lumbar spine done 2-19-15 was noted to be unremarkable. A request for authorization is dated 8-12-15. The requested treatment of Lidoderm patch #30 with 1 refill was non-certified on 8-24-15.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lidoderm patch, #30 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): Topical Analgesics.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on topical lidocaine states: Lidocaine Indication: Neuropathic pain Recommended for localized peripheral 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). Topical lidocaine, in the formulation of a dermal patch (Lidoderm) has been designated for orphan status by the FDA for neuropathic pain. Lidoderm is also used off-label for diabetic neuropathy. No other commercially approved topical formulations of lidocaine (whether creams, lotions or gels) are indicated for neuropathic pain. Non-dermal patch formulations are generally indicated as local anesthetics and anti-pruritics. Further research is needed to recommend this treatment for chronic neuropathic pain disorders other than post-herpetic neuralgia. Formulations that do not involve a dermal-patch system are generally indicated as local anesthetics and anti-pruritics. In February 2007 the FDA notified consumers and healthcare professionals of the potential hazards of the use of topical lidocaine. Those at particular risk were individuals that applied large amounts of this substance over large areas, left the products on for long periods of time, or used the agent with occlusive dressings. Systemic exposure was highly variable among patients. Only FDA-approved products are currently recommended. (Argoff, 2006) (Dworkin, 2007) (Khaliq-Cochrane, 2007) (Knotkova, 2007) (Lexi-Comp, 2008) Non-neuropathic pain: Not recommended. There is only one trial that tested 4% lidocaine for treatment of chronic muscle pain. The results showed there was no superiority over placebo. (Scudds, 1995) This medication is recommended for localized peripheral pain. The patient does have peripheral pain in the form of radiculopathy, however the patient has no documented failure of all first line agents indicated for the treatment of neuropathic pain as outlined above. Therefore criteria as set forth by the California MTUS as outlined above have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.