

Case Number:	CM15-0192393		
Date Assigned:	10/06/2015	Date of Injury:	03/09/2009
Decision Date:	11/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/09/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/30/2015

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 51 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on March 3, 2009, incurring neck, upper back, and wrists and hands. She was diagnosed with bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and cervical sprain and cervicalgia. Treatment included pain medications, anti-inflammatory drugs, muscle relaxants and neuropathic medications, transcutaneous electrical stimulation unit, and a cervical epidural steroid injection with no significant relief. Medication management was started on the day of injury. She underwent bilateral carpal tunnel release. Currently, the injured worker complained of increased neck pain rated 7 out of 10 on a pain scale from 0 to 10, and bilateral wrist pain rated 8 out of 10. The neck pain caused the injured worker to have intermittent headaches, bilateral elbow and shoulder pain. She experienced frequent numbness and tingling in the bilateral hands with chronic pain. Oral steroids provided no relief of the pain. Other treatments included bracing and splinting. She was diagnosed with cervical spondylosis. The continued chronic pain interfered with her activities of daily living and required modified work duties. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization on September 30, 2015, included a prescription for Flexeril 5 mg #30. On September 9, 2015, a request for a prescription of Flexeril was non-certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flexeril 5mg QTY: 30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Muscle relaxants (for pain).

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, but rather for ongoing and chronic neck 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.