

Case Number:	CM15-0201923		
Date Assigned:	10/16/2015	Date of Injury:	09/14/2011
Decision Date:	11/25/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/23/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/14/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 was a 49 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury, September 14, 2011. The injured worker was undergoing treatment for lumbar spine musculoligamentous strain and or sprain with radiculitis, lumbar spine disc herniation with radiculopathy. According to progress note of August 19, 2015, the injured worker's chief complaint was pain in the low back pain. The injured worker rated the pain at 7 out of 10. There was grade 2-3 tenderness to palpation over the paraspinal muscles, which remained the same since the last visit. There was restricted range of motion. Straight leg raises test was positive bilaterally. The injured worker previously received the following treatments 8 sessions of physical therapy which decreased the pain and tenderness, Tramadol 50mg one table every 12 hours as needed for pain since April 15, 2015 and topical cream. The RFA (request for authorization) dated August 19, 2015; the following treatments were requested Tramadol 50mg #60. The UR (utilization review board) denied certification on September 23, 2015; for a prescription for Tramadol 50mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol Tab 50mg, #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): Opioids for chronic pain, Opioids, criteria for use, Opioids, cancer pain vs. nonmalignant pain.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines cite opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing results or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids in terms of decreased pharmacological dosing, decreased medical utilization, increased ADLs and functional work status with persistent severe pain for this chronic 2011 injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive neurological deterioration. The Tramadol Tab 50mg, #60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.