

Case Number:	CM15-0204071		
Date Assigned:	10/21/2015	Date of Injury:	01/27/1990
Decision Date:	12/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/01/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/16/2015

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: Arizona, California

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 63 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 1-27-90. The injured worker reported knee and shoulder discomfort. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatments for lumbar radiculopathy, right knee medial meniscus tear and left knee joint pain. Medical records dated 6-8-15 indicate low back intermittent pain rated at 7 out of 10. Provider documentation dated 6-8-15 noted the work status as permanent modified work. Treatment has included home exercise program, right knee magnetic resonance imaging (4-25-09), left knee magnetic resonance imaging (9-18-12), right shoulder magnetic resonance imaging (7-6-12), and cervical, lumbar and thoracic spine magnetic resonance imaging (1-24-12), radiographic studies, Lyrica since at least January of 2015, Flector patch since at least January of 2015, Gabapentin since at least April of 2015, and Relafen since at least January of 2015. Objective findings dated 6-8-15 were notable for neck with limited range of motion and tender neck muscles bilaterally, right knee with tenderness, lower back with limited range of motion and tenderness. The original utilization review (10-1-15) partially approved a request for Tizanidine 4mg twice a day, #90 with 3-refills.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tizanidine 4mg twice a day, #90 with 3-refills: 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: According to the MTUS guidelines, Tizanidine is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. It falls under the category of muscle relaxants. According to the MTUS guidelines, muscle relaxants are to be used with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic low back pain. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most low back pain 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. In this case, the claimant had been on muscle relaxants the prior months along with NSAIDS. Continued and chronic use of muscle relaxants/antispasmodics is not medically necessary. Therefore Tizanidine with 3 refills is not medically necessary.