

Case Number:	CM15-0205068		
Date Assigned:	10/22/2015	Date of Injury:	05/01/2011
Decision Date:	12/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/19/2015

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 is a 56 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 5-1-11. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic pain syndrome, diffuse myofascial pain, s/p THR 4 years ago, s/p shoulder arthroscopy, and mood and sleep disorder. Treatment to date has included aquatic therapy, epidural steroid injections, and medication including Flector patches, Gabapentin, Lidoderm patches, Ultracet, Voltaren gel, and Zolpidem. The injured worker had been taking Zolpidem since at least July 2015. On 9-21-15, the injured worker complained of sleep disturbances and restless sleep. The treating physician requested authorization for Zolpidem 5mg #30. On 9-28-15 the request was modified to certify Zolpidem 5mg #7 to allow for continued taper and discontinuation.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Zolpidem 5mg #30: 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), Zolpidem (Ambien).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic): Zolpidem (Ambien®), pages 877-878.

Decision rationale: Review indicates the request for Zolpidem prescribed since at least July 2015 was modified for #7 to assist in tapering. MTUS Guidelines is silent; however, per the ODG, this non-benzodiazepines CNS depressant should not be used for prolonged periods of time and is the treatment of choice in very few conditions. The tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly with anxiolytic effects occurring within months; limiting its use to 4 weeks as long-term use may actually increase anxiety. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers, and anti-anxiety agents are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. They can be habit-forming, and they may impair function and memory more than opioid pain relievers. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term. Submitted reports have not identified any clinical findings or specific sleep issues such as number of hours of sleep, difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep or how the use of this sedative/hypnotic has provided any functional improvement if any from treatment rendered. The reports have not demonstrated any clinical findings or confirmed diagnoses of sleep disorders to support its use for this chronic 2011 injury. There is no failed trial of behavioral interventions or conservative sleep hygiene approach towards functional restoration. The Zolpidem 5mg #30 is not medically necessary and appropriate.