

Case Number:	CM15-0205565		
Date Assigned:	10/22/2015	Date of Injury:	07/08/2009
Decision Date:	12/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/20/2015

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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 69-year-old male with a date of industrial injury 7-8-2009. The medical records indicated the injured worker (IW) was treated for post-traumatic headaches; cervical sprain; myofascial spasm and pain; and memory loss. In the progress notes (9-16-15), the IW reported neck pain, headaches, forehead numbness and a pulsating sensation. He also reported some amnesia, weight loss, difficulty sleeping and depression. He stated his headaches, neck pain and pain in other parts of his body caused difficulty with performing daily activities, but was not specific. On examination (9-16-15 notes), there was severe tenderness at the cervical paravertebrals, trapezius and interscapular area and the rhomboids. Flexion, extension and side tilting of the cervical spine were restricted. Cervical compression and Spurling's tests were negative. Treatments included home exercise, psychotherapy and Fioricet (prescribed 9-16-15) for headaches. A Request for Authorization was received for Fioricet 50-325mg #90. The Utilization Review on 9-30-15 non-certified the request for Fioricet 50-325mg #90.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Fioricet 50/325mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Barbiturate-containing analgesic agents.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Barbiturate-containing analgesic agents.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work injury in July 2009 when he fell backwards from a ladder and struck the back of his head on concrete. He continues to be treated for chronic neck pain, headaches, and PTSD. He was seen by the requesting provider in September 2015. He had headaches. Neck pain, forehead numbness and a pulsating sensation, with depression and difficulty concentrating. Medications were metoprolol, clopidogrel, and tamulosin. There was cervical, trapezius, and interscapular tenderness. There was restricted restricted cervical range of motion. Fioricet was started for the claimant's headaches. Barbiturate-containing analgesic agents such as Fioricet are not recommended. The Beers criteria for inappropriate medication use include barbiturates. There is a high potential for drug dependence and no evidence to show a clinically important increased analgesic efficacy due to the barbiturate constituents. There is a risk of medication overuse as well as rebound headache. Additionally, in this case, classifying the claimant's headaches would be expected to identify appropriate alternative treatments and preventative measures. Given the claimant's age and history of injury and cognitive problems, it is a poor choice of medications. Prescribing Fioricet was not medically necessary.