

Case Number:	CM15-0209668		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2015	Date of Injury:	03/30/2013
Decision Date:	12/16/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/26/2015

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, District of Columbia, Maryland
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, 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:

The injured worker is a 44-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 3-13-2013 and has been treated for the right knee. She is status post right knee arthroscopic surgery. On 9-28-2015 the injured worker reported continued right knee pain which varies in intensity day-to-day and with activity, sometimes to 8-9 out of 10 on the VAS rating scale. Objective findings include the physician noting that the injured worker "favors" the right knee, but has a normal gait and is full weight bearing. The knee was noted to have slight swelling; she had unrestricted range of motion of the knee; and, there was slight tenderness at the medial joint line. Documented treatment includes stated surgery, physical therapy, home exercise, and Voltaren "only when pain is extreme" due to side effect of "extreme dizziness." The treating physician's plan of care includes discontinuing Voltaren and starting her on tramadol, Cidaflex, and Exoten-C lotion containing methyl salicylate 20 percent, menthol 10 percent, capsaicin 0.0002 percent "for local application." A request for authorization was submitted 9-28-2015 for Exoten-C lotion, but was denied on 10-14-2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Compounded Topical Exoten-C lotion (methyl salicylate, menthol and capsaicin lotion):
 Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Topical Analgesics.

Decision rationale: Exoten-C lotion is capsaicin, menthol, and methyl salicylate. Per the MTUS guidelines, capsaicin is recommended only as an option in patients who have not responded or are intolerant to other treatments. Per MTUS p 112 "Indications: There are positive randomized studies with capsaicin cream in patients with osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, and chronic non-specific back pain, but it should be considered experimental in very high doses. Although topical capsaicin has moderate to poor efficacy, it may be particularly useful (alone or in conjunction with other modalities) in patients whose pain has not been controlled successfully with conventional therapy." The documentation did not indicate osteoarthritis or fibromyalgia. Methyl salicylate may have an indication for chronic pain in this context. Per MTUS p105, Recommended. Topical salicylate (e.g., Ben-Gay, methyl salicylate) is significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. (Mason-BMJ, 2004). Exoten-C topical lotion contains menthol. The CA MTUS, ODG, National Guidelines Clearinghouse, and ACOEM provide no evidence-based recommendations regarding the topical application of menthol. It is the opinion of this IMR reviewer that a lack of endorsement, a lack of mention, inherently implies a lack of recommendation, or a status equivalent to "not recommended". Since menthol is not medically indicated, then the overall product is not indicated per MTUS as outlined below. Note the statement on page 111: Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Regarding the use of multiple medications, MTUS p60 states, "Only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. Analgesic medications should show effects within 1 to 3 days, and the analgesic effect of antidepressants should occur within 1 week. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. (Mens, 2005) The recent AHRQ review of comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesics for osteoarthritis concluded that each of the analgesics was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks, and no currently available analgesic was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others." Therefore, it would be optimal to trial each medication individually. As multiple components are not recommended, the request is not medically necessary.