

Case Number:	CM15-0220945		
Date Assigned:	11/16/2015	Date of Injury:	07/15/2014
Decision Date:	12/30/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/10/2015

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 51 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 7-15-14. The injured worker was being treated for medial meniscal tear of left knee. On 10-8-14, the injured worker complains of occasional left knee pain described as stabbing pain which only lasts for a few minutes, my occur 4-5 times a week with an occasional op in knee, no locking, no swelling and no weakness. He is currently working. Physical exam performed on 10-8-14 revealed normal gait, slightly decreased range of motion of knees and reflexes are trace at knees and ankles. Treatment to date has included oral medications including aspirin, glucosamine chondroitin and vitamins and activity modifications. The treatment plan included request for Flurbiprofen 25%-Lidocaine 5%-Menthol 5%-Capsaicin 0.025% cream. There is no documentation failed oral medications or neurologic pain. On 10-29-15 request for Flurbiprofen 25%-Lidocaine 5%-Menthol 5%-Capsaicin 0.025% cream was non-certified by utilization review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective request for Flurbiprofen 25%/Lidocaine 5%/Menthol 5%/Capsaicin 0.025% cream (DOS: 10/8/14): Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: Per MTUS with regard to Flurbiprofen (p112), "These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. (Mason, 2004) Indications: Osteoarthritis and tendinitis, in particular, that of the knee and elbow or other joints that are amenable to topical treatment: Recommended for short-term use (4-12 weeks). There is little evidence to utilize topical NSAIDs for treatment of osteoarthritis of the spine, hip or shoulder." Flurbiprofen may be indicated for the injured worker's knee pain. Regarding topical lidocaine, MTUS states (p112) "Neuropathic pain: Recommended for localized peripheral pain after there has been evidence of a trial of first-line therapy (tri-cyclic or SNRI anti-depressants or an AED such as gabapentin or Lyrica). Non-neuropathic pain: Not recommended. There is only one trial that tested 4% lidocaine for treatment of chronic muscle pain. The results showed there was no superiority over placebo. (Scudds, 1995)" There was no documentation of evidence that a trial of first-line therapy has taken place. Lidocaine is not indicated. 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." 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. 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. As multiple agents are not recommended, the requested compound is not medically necessary.