

Case Number:	CM15-0031893		
Date Assigned:	02/25/2015	Date of Injury:	04/01/2005
Decision Date:	04/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/21/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/20/2015

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: Texas, 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 44 year old male with an industrial injury dated 04/01/2005. His diagnoses include depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, lumbar radiculopathy, and status post lumbar fusion (2006). Recent diagnostic testing has included electrodiagnostic studies (08/20/2014) showing evidence of left peroneal neuropathy below the left fibular head, and x-rays of the lumbar spine (11/12/2014) showing multilevel disc space narrowing. Previous treatments have included conservative care, lumbar surgery (2006), and medications. In a progress note dated 01/09/2015, the treating physician reports headaches, nausea with migraines, loss of sensation in the left lower extremity when getting up from a lying position with recent falls resulting in severe bruising, numbness in the left medial leg all the way down to the big toe and in the gluteal region, shooting pain in the low back down to the posterior thigh and calf. The objective examination revealed lumbar/lumbosacral abnormalities, cervical lymph node enlargement, erythematous oral cavity, abnormal sensory exam, decreased strength in the left lower extremity, and abnormal deep tendon reflexes. The medication list include MS contin, Percocet, Wellbutrin, Cymbalta Seroquel, lunesta, gabapentin, Soma.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MS Contin 30mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioid Page(s): 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines -Opioids, criteria for use: page 76-80, CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS, Therapeutic Trial of Opioids.

Decision rationale: MS Contin 30mg #60. MS Contin 30mg #60 is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. Continuing review of the overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs. The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. MTUS guidelines also recommend urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs in patients using opioids for long term. A recent urine drug screen report is not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement including ability to work is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of MS Contin 30mg #60 is not established for this patient.