

Case Number:	CM15-0032267		
Date Assigned:	02/25/2015	Date of Injury:	03/02/2010
Decision Date:	04/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/13/2015
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: Florida

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 56 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on March 2, 2010. The diagnoses have included sensorineural hearing loss and tinnitus. Treatment to date has included computed tomography scan of mastoids. Currently, the injured worker complains of ENT problems. In a progress note dated January 26, 2015, the treating provider reports exam was within normal limits. On February 13, 2015 Utilization Review non-certified a one bilateral tinnitus masking hearing aids, and prescription for Lipoflavonoid three months, noting, National Guideline Clearinghouse, Tunkel DE, Bauer CA, Sun GH, Rosendfeld RM, Chandrasekhar SS was cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One (1) bilateral tinnitus masking hearing aids: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines, hearing aids.

Decision rationale: MTUS guidelines do not address the request for hearing aids, and therefore the ODG was referenced. The ODG states that hearing aids are recommended for conductive hearing loss unresponsive to medical or surgical intervention. This patient was evaluated by an ENT physician and an audiologist and it has been determined that he does have substantial hearing loss and also the diagnosis of tinnitus. Likewise, this ENT physician requested bilateral tinnitus masking hearing aids. This request appears reasonable, and is considered medically necessary and appropriate.

One (1) prescription for Lipoflavonoids, 3 months: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Diagnostic approach to patients with Tinnitus
KENNETH S. YEW, MD, MPH, Family Medicine of Albemarle, Charlottesville, Virginia
Am Fam Physician. 2014 Jan 15;89(2):106-113.

Decision rationale: MTUS, ACOEM, and ODG guidelines do not address this request. Therefore, alternative sources were referenced. Lipoflavonoid (or Lipo-flavonoid) is a over-the-counter, dietary supplement formula. It is claimed by the manufacturer to improve circulation in the inner ear, as a means of combating tinnitus (ringing in the ears). It is not FDA approved. There are few studies to support efficacy. In researching this request, multiple sources were referenced, including AAFP, Uptodate, PubMed, and no sources were found that were recommending this supplement as a treatment for tinnitus. It would appear that high quality evidence is lacking. Likewise, this request is not considered medically necessary.