

Case Number:	CM15-0032633		
Date Assigned:	02/26/2015	Date of Injury:	08/08/2009
Decision Date:	04/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/23/2015
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: North Carolina
 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 52-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on August 8, 2009. The diagnoses have included post-traumatic neuralgia of the left paraumbilical area, left knee sprain, surgical hernia repair and insomnia. Treatment to date has included medications, hernia repair surgery, knee brace and diagnostic testing. Currently, the injured worker complains of constant pain in the abdominal wall area and constant intractable knee pain. He rates the pain a 6-8 on a 10-point scale and reports that he has had greater than 60-890% improvement in pain with medications. He reports moderate difficulty sleeping without his medications and notes that he has been feeling severely depressed. On January 23, 2015 Utilization Review non-certified a request for Ambien tablets 10 mg and urine drug screen, noting that the guidelines do not recommend long-term sleep aids and there is no documentation of current sleep disturbance, results of sleep behavior modification attempts or documentation of failed trials of other guideline supported treatments. In addition, there is no documentation of the dates of previous drug screening over the previous 12 months and what those results were and any potential related actions taken. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule and the Official Disability Guidelines were cited. On February 20, 2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of Ambien tablets 10 mg and urine drug screen.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ambien 10mg tablets #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG-TWC); Work Loss Data Institute (www.worklossdata.com), Zolpidem.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, ambien.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS and the ACOEM do not specifically address the requested medication. PER the ODG: Zolpidem is a prescription short-acting non-benzodiazepine hypnotic approved for the short-term treatment of insomnia. Proper sleep hygiene is critical to the individual with chronic pain. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers and anti-anxiety medications are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term. The medication is not intended for use greater than 6 weeks. There is no notation or rationale given for longer use in the provided progress reports. There is no documentation of other preferred long-term insomnia intervention choices being tried and failed. For these reasons, the request is not certified.

Urine drug screen #1: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 43. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Chronic Pain.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 76-84.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a

framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000)(d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. The California MTUS does recommend urine drug screens as part of the criteria for ongoing use of opioids .The patient was on opioids at the time of request and therefore the request is medically warranted.