

Case Number:	CM15-0036704		
Date Assigned:	03/05/2015	Date of Injury:	01/20/1998
Decision Date:	04/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/26/2015

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: Arizona, 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 54 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 1/20/98. The injured worker reported symptoms in the neck, shoulders and bilateral upper extremities. The diagnoses included chronic multifactorial cervical pain on an industrial basis with cervical facet arthropathy. Treatments to date include status post right shoulder surgery in 2010, oral pain medications, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, activity modification. The claimant had been on Tramadol and Trazadone for years for pain. In a progress note dated 10/15/14 the treating provider reports the injured worker was with "constant left sided neck pain/shoulder pain/upper extremity pain due to repetitive activity." Recent progress notes indicate the claimant had 60% improvement on Norco and Trazadone. On 2/17/15 Utilization Review modified the request for Norco 10/325 milligrams #120 to Norco 10/325 milligrams #90 between 2/4/15 and 4/14/15. The MTUS, ACOEM Guidelines, (or ODG) was cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 82-92.

Decision rationale: Norco is a short acting opioid used for breakthrough pain. According to the MTUS guidelines, it is not indicated as 1st line therapy for neuropathic pain, and chronic back pain . It is not indicated for mechanical or compressive etiologies. It is recommended for a trial basis for short-term use. Long Term-use has not been supported by any trials. In this case, the claimant had been on Tramadol (another opioid) for years. No one opioid is superior to another and long-term use of opioids is not recommended or studies. There is no indication of Tylenol failure. The continued use of Norco is not medically necessary.

Trazodone 150mg #15 with 2 refills: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 388. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Mental Illness and Stress.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines trazadone Page(s): 14-18.

Decision rationale: Trazadone is a tricyclic antidepressant. According to the MTUS guidelines, this class of medications is to be used for depression, radiculopathy, back pain, and fibromyalgia. Tricyclic antidepressants have been shown in both a meta-analysis and a systematic review to be effective, and are considered a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. In this case, the claimant had panic attacks and chronic neck pain. The claimant had benefit from use in pain reduction. The use of Trazadone is appropriate and medically necessary.