

Case Number:	CM15-0038399		
Date Assigned:	03/09/2015	Date of Injury:	01/11/2014
Decision Date:	04/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/02/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 46-year-old female, who sustained a work/ industrial injury on 1/11/14 to multiple body parts. She has reported symptoms of aching lower back and tailbone (coccyx) with pain rating of 5/10. Prior medical history was not documented. The diagnoses have included lumbar sprain/strain, displaced lumbar discs without myopathy, strain/sprain to hip and thigh, thoracic sprain/strain, thoracic/lumbosacral neuritis/radiculitis. Treatments to date included medication, diagnostics, chiropractic care (16 sessions), and acupuncture (6 sessions). Medications included Tramadol-APAP, Nabumetone, and Omeprazole. The treating physician's report (PR-2) from 12/23/14 indicated the injured worker continued to have occasional back pain and coccyx pain. There was also numbness of the left lower extremity down to the toes. Examination noted tenderness to palpation, restricted range of motion and straight leg raise (SLR) was positive at 80 degrees. On 2/16/15, Utilization Review modified Tramadol/Acetaminophen 37.5/325 mg QTY: 120 to Tramadol/Acetaminophen 37.5/325 #60, for weaning, citing the California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Guidelines, Chronic Pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol/Acetaminophen 37.5/325 mg QTY: 120: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Tramadol/Acetaminophen 37.5/325 mg QTY: 120 is not medically necessary and appropriate.