

Case Number:	CM14-0111207		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	04/30/2008
Decision Date:	09/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/14/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 41-year-old female who has submitted a claim for internal derangement left knee, disc protrusion, and lumbar radiculopathy, fibromyalgia, associated with an industrial injury date of April 30, 2008. Medical records from 2014 were reviewed. The latest progress report, dated 05/05/2014, showed left ankle pain. Physical examination revealed left ankle tenderness at the post-operative site. There was reduced range of motion of the left ankle. MRI of lumbar spine, dated 04/25/2012, showed mild disc desiccation with left lateral osteophytes noted at the L3-L4 and L4-L5 levels with associated mild narrowing of the left L3 and left L4 neural foramina. Mild degenerative changes were seen involving the left L4-L5 apophyseal joint. Mild disc desiccation with a 1-2 mm broad based left sided disc protrusion noted at the L5-S1 level. The protruding disc abuts but did not compress the ventral aspect of the thecal sac as well as the emerging left S1 nerve root. Treatment to date has included left ankle surgery (03/05/2014), left calf surgery, interferential unit and medications such as topical creams prescribed May 2014. Utilization review from 06/16/2014 denied the request for the purchase of Flurbiprofen 20%, Capsaicin 0.025%, Methyl Salicylate 4% in Lipoderm base 180 gm #1 and Gabapentin 5%, Ketoprofen 10%, Tramadol 5%, Cyclobenzaprine 2.5% in Lipoderm base 180 gm #1 because topical NSAIDs were not recommended for treatment of the spine. Furthermore, the guidelines recommended against topical use of Gabapentin or Cyclobenzaprine, or any compounded topical medication that contained either of those medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flurbiprofen 20%, Capsaicin 0.025%, Methyl Salicylate 4% in lipoderm base 180gm:
Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical analgesics Page(s): 111-113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official disabilities guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics;; Salicylate topicals;Capsaicin topical Page(s): 111-113;105;28.

Decision rationale: As stated on pages 111-113 of the California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, there is little to no research as for the use of Flurbiprofen in compounded products. According to page 28 of the CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, topical Capsaicin has moderate to poor efficacy but may be particularly useful (alone or in conjunction with other modalities) in patients whose pain has not been controlled successfully with conventional therapy. According to page 105 of CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, topical salicylates are significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. These products are generally used to relieve minor aches and pains. In this case compounded products were prescribed for relief of pain. However, there is no discussion concerning the need for three different topical medications. In addition, certain component of this compound, i.e., Flurbiprofen, is not recommended for topical use. Guidelines state that any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Therefore, the request for Flurbiprofen 20%, Capsaicin 0.025%, and Methyl Salicylate 4% in Lipoderm base 180 gm #1 is not medically necessary.

Gabapentin 5%, Ketoprofen 10%, Tramadol 5%, Cyclobenzaprine 2.5% in lipoderm base 180mg qty 1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical analgesics Page(s): 111-113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official disabilities guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

Decision rationale: As stated on pages 111-113 of the California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, topical Gabapentin is not recommended and has no peer-reviewed literature to support its use. Ketoprofen is not recommended for topical use as there is a high incidence of photo contact dermatitis. The topical formulation of Tramadol does not show consistent efficacy. The use of Cyclobenzaprine as a topical muscle relaxant is not recommended. In this case, compounded products were prescribed for relief of pain. However, there is no discussion concerning the need for four different topical medications. In addition, certain components of this compound, i.e., Gabapentin, Ketoprofen, Tramadol, Cyclobenzaprine, are not recommended for topical use. Guidelines state that any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended.

Therefore, the request for Gabapentin 5%, Ketoprofen 10%, Tramadol 5%, and Cyclobenzaprine 2.5% in Lipoderm base 180 gm #1 is not medically necessary.