

Case Number:	CM14-0130204		
Date Assigned:	08/20/2014	Date of Injury:	01/30/2013
Decision Date:	11/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/06/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/14/2014

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 Occupational 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for generalized anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, and insomnia reportedly associated with an industrial injury of January 30, 2013. In a Utilization Review Report dated August 6, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for Remeron while approving a request for Zoloft. The claims administrator invoked Non-MTUS Official Disability Guidelines in its denial exclusively and suggested that the applicant employ Zoloft monotherapy in favor of combo-therapy with Remeron and Zoloft. The claims administrator stated, in its denial, that it was basing its decision on a July 24, 2014 RFA form and associated progress note, neither of which were seemingly incorporated into the IMR packet. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In an April 5, 2014 progress note, the applicant reported feeling less depressed, less anxious, and less irritable. The applicant was reportedly improving slowly following introduction of Remeron. The applicant was asked to continue Remeron and begin usage of Zoloft. The applicant was, however, asked to remain off of work, on total temporary disability. In a June 21, 2014 progress note, the applicant stated that he was slightly less depressed following introduction of psychotropic medications. The applicant was asked to continue Zoloft on this occasion and return to modified duty work. The applicant's Global Assessment of Function (GAF) was 52. In one section of the note, it was stated that the applicant was tolerating Remeron well and should continue the same while another section of the note suggested that the applicant should taper off of Remeron per the applicant's request.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Remeron 15 mg #30: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Integrated Treatment /Disability Duration Guidelines/ Mental Illness & Stress

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 402.

Decision rationale: As noted in the MTUS-adopted ACOEM Guidelines in Chapter 15, page 402, antidepressants such as Remeron "may be helpful" to alleviate symptoms of depression. In this case, the attending provider's documentation, while at times incongruous, does seemingly suggest that the applicant was deriving more improvement from the combination of Remeron and Zoloft as opposed to with Remeron monotherapy. The attending provider did write on several occasions that the applicant was tolerating Remeron well. While it is acknowledged that the July 24, 2014 RFA form and associated progress note on which the article at issue was sought was seemingly not incorporated into the IMR packet, the information which is on file, while at times incongruous, does seemingly suggest that the applicant was using Remeron and improving with the same in terms of diminished depressive symptoms and improved mood. Continuing the same, on balance, is indicated. Therefore, the request is medically necessary.