

Case Number:	CM14-0140852		
Date Assigned:	09/10/2014	Date of Injury:	05/20/2011
Decision Date:	10/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/02/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine 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 66-year-old male with a date of injury of 05/20/2011. The listed diagnoses per [REDACTED] are: 1. Cervical spinal stenosis. 2. Pain in joint, shoulder, bilateral. 3. Pain in joint, hand, thumb, basilar joint, bilaterally. 4. Disorder, sacrum. According to progress report, 06/11/2014, the patient presents with bilateral upper extremity and neck pain. He is status post cervical discectomy and fusion at level C4 to C7 on 05/13/2014. Patient continues to note pain and difficulty sleeping at night due to pain. According to progress report 08/28/2014, the patient continues with neck pain that radiates into the shoulders. The patient is being prescribed tramadol by [REDACTED] for his pain. Examination revealed normal muscle tone without atrophy. Patient's medication regimen includes Advil 200 mg, Biofreeze, cold therapy, Theraflex, arnica cream, ashwagandha extract 2.5%, Cozaar 25 mg, metformin HCl, simvastatin 10 mg, terazosin 2 mg, omega 3, and tramadol 50 mg. This is a request for arnica topical cream to be applied to the affected area 3 times a day. Utilization review denied the request on 07/29/2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Amica Cream #1 TID: 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) (updated

06/10/2014), Topical Analgesics <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC539394/>, homeopathic arnica for prevention of pain and bruising.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 16 Eye Chapter Page(s): 491. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: www.webmd.com Arnica The flower of arnica is used to make medicine. Arnica is applied to the skin for pain and swelling associated with bruises, aches, sprains, and arthritis. It is also applied to the skin for insect bites, muscle and cartilage pain, chapped lips, and acne. It is also taken by mouth for sore mouth and throat, insect bites, painful and swollen veins near the surface of the skin (

Decision rationale: This patient presents with continued neck and upper extremity pain. The treater is requesting arnica topical cream to be applied to the affected area 3 times a day. Treater states the patient would like to utilize this cream to "help with inflammation and healing." The MTUS, ACOEM, and ODG Guidelines do not discuss arnica topical cream. [Webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) states that arnica is a flower that is used to make medicine. Arnica is a herbal supplement that includes *Arnica cordifolia*. "Arnica is applied to the skin for pain and swelling associated with bruises, aches, sprains, and arthritis. It is also applied to the skin for insect bites, muscle and cartilage pain, chapped lips, and acne." ACOEM Guidelines has the following regarding evidence-based medicine on page 149. "Evidence-based medicine focuses on the need for healthcare providers to rely on a critical appraisal of available scientific evidence rather than clinical opinion or anecdotal reports in reaching decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment, causation, and other aspects of healthcare decision making. This mandates that information regarding health outcomes and study population or experimental groups be extracted from the medical literature, after which it can be analyzed, synthesized, and applied to individual patients." In this case, Arnica is a herbal supplemental for topical application and has not been FDA approved for treatment for any medical condition. Recommendation is for denial.