

Case Number:	CM14-0160901		
Date Assigned:	10/06/2014	Date of Injury:	05/06/2009
Decision Date:	10/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/30/2014

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 Internal Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 40 year old male with a date of injury on 05/06/2009. He fell from 15 feet to a concrete surface. He landed in a standing position and there was no loss of consciousness. In the ER that day his right foot and right ankle injuries were most severe. X-rays for fracture were negative. He has been diagnosed with a strain/sprain of lumbar spine, neck, left knee, bilateral ankle and bilateral foot. He has been treated with oral and topical medications, physical therapy, brace, TENS and chiropractic care. On 09/28/2010 he was P&S. On 08/07/2011 during a violent crime, he was shot in the abdomen. In 2010 he was taking Tramadol. On 06/13/2014 he was placed on a Tramadol weaning program because of lack of evidence of functional improvement. After 06/13/2014 there was no documentation of functional improvement. On 08/25/2014 he had neck, back, knee, shoulder, arm and ankle pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol 50mg #120: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids On-going Management, and Tramadol Page(s): 113, 78 79.

Decision rationale: MTUS, Chronic Pain notes, Tramadol (Ultram) is a centrally acting synthetic opioid analgesic and it is not recommended as a first line oral analgesic." Also, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines page 78. On-Going Management, Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring are: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. There has been no documentation of functional improvement from the use of Tramadol. The documentation criteria for on-going opioid treatment were not met.