

Case Number:	CM14-0180149		
Date Assigned:	11/04/2014	Date of Injury:	10/01/1997
Decision Date:	12/09/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/21/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/29/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 56-year-old man who sustained a work related injury on October 1, 1997. Subsequently, she developed chronic knee pain. The patient underwent ACL repair/reconstruction, bone grafts, and screw fixation on September 16, 1998. A right knee MRI dated August 15, 2011 showed no evidence for rupture of the ACL graft. Orientation of the ACL graft fibers was within normal limits. No meniscal tear seen. No focal chondral defects were identified. According to the progress report dated October 6, 2014, the patient continued to complain of knee pain. On examination, there was some mild crepitation noted in the right knee and varicosities in the right lower extremity. A urine toxicology report dated August 14, 2014 was positive for Tramadol and negative for Hydrocodone. The patient was diagnosed with right knee pain, status post anterior cruciate ligament repair, and varicose veins. The provider requested authorization for Tramadol.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol 50mg By mouth twice a day as needed, #45: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol Page(s): 113.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Ultram (Tramadol) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (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. 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. Although, Tramadol may be needed to help with the patient pain, there is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement from its previous use. There is no objective documentation of pain severity level to justify the use of tramadol with Norco in this patient. There is no clear documentation of the efficacy/safety of previous use of tramadol. Therefore, the prescription of Tramadol is not medically necessary.