

Case Number:	CM13-0063222		
Date Assigned:	03/24/2014	Date of Injury:	06/18/2013
Decision Date:	10/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/15/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/09/2013

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: North Carolina

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 injured worker is a 50-year-old female, with a reported date of injury of 06-18-2013. The diagnoses include primary osteoarthritis of the hand. Treatments and evaluation to date have included Naprosyn. The medical report dated 10-30-2013 indicates that the injured worker complained of left arm and hand numbness and right hand pain. She would feel numbness in the whole hand on the left side, typically at night and with work. The numbness is on and off in the left hand, but fairly consistent. The numbness would improve with change to a different position. The physical examination showed negative bilateral Spurling's, negative Tinel's in the bilateral elbows, negative flexed elbow test bilaterally, tenderness in the right CMC (carpometacarpal) joint with grinding with pressure, full range of motion of the fingers, negative provocative test for carpal tunnel, left CMC joint with minimal pain, positive Phalen's test in the fourth and fifth fingers. It was noted that x-rays of the right hand showed slight CMC arthritis. The treatment plan included oral anti-inflammatory medications for the right CMC and MP (metacarpophalangeal) joints and left wrist ulnar nerve compression and carpal tunnel syndrome. The treating physician planned to refill the Naprosyn as the injured worker expressed that she had run out of the medication. The injured worker continued to work unrestricted. The treating physician requested an anti-inflammatory medication (unspecified name, dosage, quantity, and number of refills). On 11-15-2013, Utilization Review non-certified the request for an anti-inflammatory medication (unspecified name, dosage, quantity, and number of refills).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Anti-inflammatory medication (unspecified name medication, dosage, quantity and number of refills): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on NSAID therapy states: Recommended at the lowest dose for the shortest period in patients with moderate to severe pain. Acetaminophen may be considered for initial therapy for patients with mild to moderate pain, and in particular, for those with gastrointestinal, cardiovascular or renovascular risk factors. NSAIDs appear to be superior to acetaminophen, particularly for patients with moderate to severe pain. There is no evidence to recommend one drug in this class over another based on efficacy. In particular, there appears to be no difference between traditional NSAIDs and COX-2 NSAIDs in terms of pain relief. The main concern of selection is based on adverse effects. COX-2 NSAIDs have fewer GI side effects at the risk of increased cardiovascular side effects, although the FDA has concluded that long-term clinical trials are best interpreted to suggest that cardiovascular risk occurs with all NSAIDs and is a class effect (with naproxyn being the safest drug). There is no evidence of long-term effectiveness for pain or function. (Chen, 2008) (Laine, 2008) Back Pain: Chronic low back pain: Recommended as an option for short-term symptomatic relief. A Cochrane review of the literature on drug relief for low back pain (LBP) suggested that NSAIDs were no more effective than other drugs such as acetaminophen, narcotic analgesics, and muscle relaxants. The review also found that NSAIDs had more adverse effects than placebo and acetaminophen but fewer effects than muscle relaxants and narcotic analgesics. In addition, evidence from the review suggested that no one NSAID, including COX-2 inhibitors, was clearly more effective than another. (Roelofs-Cochrane, 2008) See also Anti-inflammatory medications. Neuropathic pain: There is inconsistent evidence for the use of these medications to treat long term neuropathic pain, but they may be useful to treat breakthrough and mixed pain conditions such as osteoarthritis (and other nociceptive pain) in with neuropathic pain. This medication is recommended for the shortest period of time and at the lowest dose possible. The dosing of this medication is within the California MTUS guideline recommendations. The definition of shortest period possible is not clearly defined in the California MTUS. However type and dosage is not specified and therefore compliance with recommendation cannot be made and the request is not medically necessary.