MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0210374		
Date Assigned:	12/23/2014	Date of Injury:	03/05/1986
Decision Date:	02/19/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/16/2014

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. 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: California
Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

74 year old male machine operator injured his neck and lower back at work on 5 Mar 1986. He has been diagnoses with cervical spine spondylosis, cervical radiculopathy, lumbar degenerative disc disease with radiculopathy, bilateral cubital tunnel syndrome. Comorbid conditions include diabetes, hypertension and acid reflux. At his most recent evaluation on 14 Nov 2014 he complained of ongoing neck and low back pain 7/10 in addition to bilateral wrist pain 6/10. Exam showed an antalgic gait with use of a cane, mild neck torticollis with a positive Spurling's maneuver, limited range of motion in the neck, tender muscles and muscle spasms in paravertebral cervical musculature. Wrists showed positive Tinel's and Phalen's signs and decreased sensation in median nerve distribution. Low back showed decreased range of motion, abnormal heel walk, paravertebral muscle spasms, knee and ankle reflexes decreased to bilaterally, positive straight leg test, negative Waddell sign and mild weakness (4/5) to quadriceps, plantar flexor and toe extensor muscles. Treatment has included physical therapy, acupuncture, aqua therapy, cane, bilateral wrist splints, stationary bicycle and medication (Tylenol with codeine, Norco, nortriptyline, Skelaxin, flurbiprofen-Baclofen-gabapentin-lidocaine cream, flurbiprofen-Baclofen-cyclobenzaprine-lidocaine cream).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Transdermal Cream (Flurbi 12%, Baclo 2%, Gaba 6%, Lido 4% cream): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 18-19, 49, 56-57, 64, 72, 111-113.

Decision rationale: Flurbi 12%-Baclo 2%-Gaba 6%-Lido 4% cream is a combination product formulated for topical use. It is made up of of flurbiprofen (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medication), baclofen (a antispasticity agent), gabapentin (an anticonvulsant) and lidocaine (an anesthetic). The use of topical agents to control pain is considered an option although it is considered largely experimental, as there is little to no research to support their use. The use of NSAIDs has been effective topically in short term use trails for chronic musculoskeletal pain but long term use has not been adequately studied. Baclofen is indicated for oral use to treat muscle spasms caused by multiple sclerosis or spinal cord injuries but the MTUS does not recommend its use as a topical agent. Gabapentin is an effective medication in controlling neuropathic pain, but the MTUS does not recommend its use topically. Topical lidocaine in the form of Lidoderm is recommended in the MTUS only for treatment of neuropathic pain. Other topical forms of this medication are not recommended and use of this medication for non-neuropathic pain is also not recommended. It is important to note the MTUS states, "Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended." Since the topical use of baclofen, gabapentin is not recommended by the MTUS, use of this entire preparation is not necessary.

Transdermal Cream (Fluri 20%, Baclo 2%, Cyclo 2%, Gaba 6%, Lido 2% cream): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 18-19, 49, 56-57, 64, 72, 111-113.

Decision rationale: Flurbi 12%-Baclo 2%-Gaba 6%-Cyclo 2%-Lido 4% cream is a combination product formulated for topical use. It is made up of flurbiprofen (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medication), baclofen (a antispasticity agent), gabapentin (an anticonvulsant), cyclobenzaprine (a muscle relaxant) and lidocaine (an anesthetic). The use of topical agents to control pain is considered an option although it is considered largely experimental, as there is little to no research to support their use. The use of NSAIDs has been effective topically in short term use trails for chronic musculoskeletal pain but long term use has not been adequately studied. Baclofen is indicated for oral use to treat muscle spasms caused by multiple sclerosis or spinal cord injuries but the MTUS does not recommend its use as a topical agent. Gabapentin is an effective medication in controlling neuropathic pain, but the MTUS does not recommend its use topically. Topical lidocaine in the form of Lidoderm is recommended in the MTUS only for treatment of neuropathic pain. Other topical forms of this

medication are not recommended and use of this medication for non-neuropathic pain is also not recommended. The MTUS does not address the topical use of cyclobenzaprine but notes that when used systemically, cyclobenzaprine use should be brief (no more than 2-3 weeks) and not combined with other medications. It is important to note the MTUS states, "Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended." Since the topical use of baclofen, gabapentin and lidocaine is not recommended by the MTUS, use of this entire preparation is not necessary.