

Case Number:	CM14-0218865		
Date Assigned:	01/08/2015	Date of Injury:	03/16/1999
Decision Date:	03/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/25/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/30/2014

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. 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: Indiana

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:

The patient is a 57 year old female who sustained a work related injury on March 16 1999. There was no mechanism of injury documented. The discussions of the medical records consist of lumbar and knee pain as the injured sites. On October 17, 2014 according to the physician's notes the patient reported a recent fall on her tile floor when her right knee buckled. According to the primary treating physician's progress report on December 16, 2014, the patient complains of chronic daily low back pain aggravated with prolonged sitting and walking and bilateral knee pain. Past surgical interventions were documented as right knee arthroscopy and meniscectomy in June 22, 1999, and repeat arthroscopy of the right knee in March 2001. Current medications are Vicodin ES, Soma, and Zantac. The injured worker is Permanent & Stationary (P&S) and does not work. The physician requested authorization for 1 prescription of Zanaflex 4 mg# 90. On December 25, 2014 the Utilization Review denied certification for 1 prescription of Zanaflex 4 mg # 90. Citations used in the decision process were the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS), Chronic Pain Guidelines regarding Muscle Relaxants.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One prescription of Zanaflex 4 m g# 90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants; Zanaflex Page(s): 63-67.

Decision rationale: Zanaflex is the brand name version of tizanidine, which is a muscle relaxant. MTUS states concerning muscle relaxants. Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (VanTulder, 1998) (van Tulder, 2003) (van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. (Homik, 2004) Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. Drugs with the most limited published evidence in terms of clinical effectiveness include chlorzoxazone, methocarbamol, dantrolene and baclofen. (Chou, 2004) According to a recent review in American Family Physician, skeletal muscle relaxants are the most widely prescribed drug class for musculoskeletal conditions (18.5% of prescriptions), and the most commonly prescribed antispasmodic agents are carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine, metaxalone, and methocarbamol, but despite their popularity, skeletal muscle relaxants should not be the primary drug class of choice for musculoskeletal conditions (See 2, 2008). MTUS further states, Tizanidine (Zanaflex, generic available) is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. (Malanga, 2008) Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. (Chou, 2007) One study (conducted only in females) demonstrated a significant decrease in pain associated with chronic myofascial pain syndrome and the authors recommended its use as a first line option to treat myofascial pain. (Malanga, 2002) May also provide benefit as an adjunct treatment for fibromyalgia (ICSI, 2007). Refills are not appropriate for Zanaflex due to the need for medical monitoring. The employee had an acute event in Oct 2014 that made his back pain worse, but the quantity 90 is much more than a short treatment as outlined in the guidelines cited above. Therefore, the request for Zanaflex 4mg #90 is not medically necessary.