

Case Number:	CM14-0094333		
Date Assigned:	07/25/2014	Date of Injury:	08/01/2007
Decision Date:	06/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/20/2014

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: Florida, New York, Pennsylvania
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 68 year old male with an industrial injury dated 08/01/2007. His diagnosis was right knee strain with contusion and residual ongoing pain. Prior treatment included medications, home exercises and ice. He presented on 04/21/2014 with complaints of pain in his right knee rated as 4/10. Physical exam revealed slight tenderness on exam of the right and left knee. Left knee was slightly swollen. The treatment plan included Exoten Lotion, Ambien and lab tests. Other treatment included anti-inflammatory medications, pain medications, medication for gastrointestinal protection and home exercising.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 prescription for Exoten lotion 120 ml: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Capsaicin, topical; Salicylate topicals.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Part 2
Page(s): 105, 111-113.

Decision rationale: The DOI for this patient is listed as 1 Aug 07. At the time the member was moving boxes and struck his right knee on an SUV. The injury was not reported immediately and subsequent radiologic evaluations reported medial joint compartment narrowing, and slight spurring of the upper pole of the patella consistent with a degenerative osteoarthritis. Exoten Lotion was requested for authorization (Capsaicin .0002%, Menthol 10% and Methyl Salicylate 20%) Topical analgesics such as Exoten Lotion are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. Advantages include lack of systemic side effects, absence of drug interactions, and no need to titrate. Topical agents can have both local effects such as dermatitis and pruritus but more importantly have been shown to have systemic absorption and can have blood levels comparable to oral forms and therefore comparable systemic side effects such as the impact on renal function and cardiovascular risks. Capsaicin is generally available as a 0.025% formulation (as a treatment for osteoarthritis) and a 0.075% formulation (primarily studied for post-herpetic neuralgia, diabetic neuropathy and post-mastectomy pain). There have been no studies of a 0.0375% formulation of capsaicin and there is no current indication that this increase over a 0.025% formulation would provide any further efficacy. The dose listed for this product does not appear to have been studied (.002%) but there are positive randomized studies with capsaicin cream at 0.025% in patients with osteoarthritis. It should be considered experimental in very high doses. Methyl Salicylate with topical use is significantly better than placebo in chronic pain and could be recommended. However, any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Unfortunately Menthol is a substance in that class. It has not been studied and cannot be recommended. Therefore the compounded product cannot be recommended and the UR Non-Cert is supported. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.