

Case Number:	CM15-0013974		
Date Assigned:	02/02/2015	Date of Injury:	11/28/2008
Decision Date:	03/19/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/23/2015

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: Arizona, California
 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 53 year old male injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 11/28/2008. The diagnosis was chronic low back pain with right lower extremity pain and weakness. The diagnostic studies were magnetic resonance imaging of the lumbar spine and electrodiagnostics. 11/22/2013The treatments were medications, cane for walking assistance, and nerve blocks. The treating provider reported pain at 9/10 without medications and 6/10 with medications. On exam there was weakness in the right leg upon dorsal flexion and plantar flexion of the foot. The Utilization Review Determination on 1/15/2015 non-certified Zanaflex 4mg #60 with 2 refills, citing MTUS.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Zanaflex 4mg, take one to two tablets at bedtime, qty: 60 tablets with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM,Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants (for pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants Page(s): 68.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, Zanaflex is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. It falls under the category of muscle relaxants. According to the MTUS guidelines, muscle relaxants are to be used with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic low back pain. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most low back pain 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. In this case, the claimant had been on muscle relaxants the prior months including several months of Balcofen (anti-spasmodics). Continued and chronic use of muscle relaxants /antispasmodics is not medically necessary. Therefore Zanaflex is not medically necessary.