

Case Number:	CM15-0015745		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	07/23/2010
Decision Date:	03/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/27/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 injured worker is a 46 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 7/23/10. She has reported lumbar spine pain. The diagnoses have included lumbar degenerative disc disease, right foot neuropathic pain and lumbar facet arthropathy. Treatment to date has included electrodiagnostic studies, cortisone injections, physical therapy and oral medications. As of the PR2 dated 12/22/14, the injured worker reported pain and stiffness of the low back. She reports a 70% decrease in pain with current medications. The treating physician requested to continue current medications including Ultram 50mg #45 x 2 refills. On 12/30/14 Utilization Review modified a request for Ultram 50mg #45 x 2 refills to Ultram 50mg #45 x no refills. The utilization review physician cited the MTUS guidelines for chronic pain treatment. On 1/27/15, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of Ultram 50mg #45 x 2 refills.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultram 50mg #45 refill 2: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol
Page(s): 113.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Ultram (Tramadol) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules:(a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy.(b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function.(c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. Although, Tramadol may be needed to help with the patient pain, there is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement from its previous use. There is no clear documentation of the efficacy/safety of previous use of tramadol. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the patient with his medications. Therefore, the prescription of Ultram 50mg #45 refill 2 is not medically necessary.