

Case Number:	CM15-0019212		
Date Assigned:	02/09/2015	Date of Injury:	07/31/2007
Decision Date:	03/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/02/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 69 year old male who sustained a work related injury on July 31, 20107, injuring his back. Diagnoses made were lumbar disc disease, lumbar radiculopathy. Treatment included a lumbar fusion, Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), home exercise program and medications. Currently, in November 2014, the injured worker presents with a complaint of persistent low back pain, burning and cramping pain in the lower extremity. On February 16, 2015, a request for a prescription for Ultram 50 mg twice a day as needed, #60 was modified to Ultram 50 mg twice a day as needed, #30, by Utilization Review, noting the California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultram ER 50mg, two (2) times per day as needed, #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 16-20, 78-80.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Page(s): 76-78.

Decision rationale: The 1/24/15 Utilization Review letter states the Ultram ER 50mg, #60 requested on the 1/06/2015 medical report was modified to allow #30 tablets because there were "no UDS screens submitted for review," and "the prior UDS did not detect Tramadol." According to the 1/6/15 pain management report, The patient takes Lyrica 50mg, bid; and Ultram 50mg, bid. The patient presents with low back pain, increased with the cold weather. Ultram was reported to decrease pain levels to allow him to continue with this walking exercises and activities. The reports states a recent UDS did not detect tramadol. The physician discussed this with the patient and found the patient takes the tramadol in the afternoon when his back pain is most extreme, and the physician believes this is the reason the tramadol was not detected in the UDS. The physician is having the patient make his next appointment in the afternoon for retesting. The physician did discuss the 4 A's of opioid monitoring, stating the pain goes from 7/10 to 1-2/10 with medications and he is able to walk 45-60 mins. Without medications he can walk 15 mins. CURES report was consistent. MTUS page 78 recommends documentation of the 4 A's (analgesia, ADLs, adverse side effects, and adverse behavior) as well as "pain assessment" or outcome measures that include current pain, average pain, least pain, intensity of pain after taking the opioid, time it takes for medication to work, and duration of pain relief. The physician has reported pain relief, improved function, side effects and aberrant behavior. The use of Ultram ER appears to be in accordance with MTUS guidelines. The request for Ultram ER 50mg, two (2) times per day as needed, #60 IS medically necessary.