

Case Number:	CM15-0118356		
Date Assigned:	06/26/2015	Date of Injury:	06/16/2010
Decision Date:	07/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/18/2015

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 51 year old male who sustained a work related injury June 16, 2010. While inspecting a food truck, he came off the truck and fell backwards, injuring his upper and lower back, left hip and right knee. He had surgery for a torn meniscus, right knee in 2006. Past history included right knee surgery November 7, 2011, and asthma. According to a treating physician's notes, dated April 8, 2015, the injured worker presented for follow-up with complaints of right knee pain and low back pain. He has had radiofrequency facet injections in the past and is taking Kadian ER and Norco for pain. The injured worker is a registered nurse and discusses with the treating physician the need for manipulation under anesthesia, as he cannot fully extend his knee, and radiofrequency ablation for the lumbar spine, but these procedures have been denied authorization. Examination of the lumbar spine revealed spasm and guarding, increased pain with facet loading especially on the left, with extension and rotation. There is severe pain over the right knee joint with mild effusion and warm to touch. He has decreased range of motion and flexion is limited to 50 degrees and pain noted with full extension. Diagnoses are spondylosis lumbosacral; pain psychogenic not elsewhere classified; pain in joint lower leg. At issue, is the request for authorization for Diclofenac Sodium.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Diclofenac Sodium 1.5% 60gm Qty: 1.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 112.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), Page 22; Topical Analgesics, pages 111-113.

Decision rationale: Anti-inflammatories are the traditional first line of treatment, to reduce pain so activity and functional restoration can resume, but long-term use may not be warranted. Monitoring of NSAID's functional benefit is advised as per Guidelines, long-term use of NSAIDS beyond a few weeks may actually retard muscle and connective tissue healing and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke in patients with or without heart disease, as well as potential for hip fractures even within the first weeks of treatment, increasing with longer use and higher doses of the NSAID. Available reports submitted have not adequately addressed the indication to continue a NSAID for a chronic injury nor have they demonstrated any functional efficacy derived from treatment already rendered. Intolerance to oral medications is not documented. Additionally, there are evidence-based published articles noting that topical treatment with NSAIDs (ketoprofen) and other medications can result in blood concentrations and systemic effects comparable to those from oral treatment. It was advised that topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be used with the same precautions as other forms of the drugs in high-risk patients, especially those with reduced drug metabolism as in renal failure. The Diclofenac Sodium 1.5% 60gm Qty: 1.00 is not medically necessary and appropriate.