

Case Number:	CM15-0121081		
Date Assigned:	07/01/2015	Date of Injury:	12/19/2000
Decision Date:	07/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/23/2015

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: New Jersey, Alabama, 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 66 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 12/19/00. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications. Diagnostic studies are not addressed. Current complaints include low back pain. Current diagnoses include lumbago and degenerative lumbosacral intervertebral disc disease. In a progress note dated 06/08/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as medications including Celebrex, Ultram, and Lunesta. The requested treatment includes Ultram.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultram 50mg, #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol (Ultram), Opioids, Criteria for Use, Weaning of Medications.

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. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: 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. According to a note dated April 3, 2015, it was indicated that the patient started weaning from Ultram since the patient had overall low levels of pain without medication. In the documents presented for review, there is no documentation of substantial change in the patient's condition to allow for continuous use of the medication. Therefore, the prescription of Ultram 50 mg is not medically necessary.