

Case Number:	CM15-0121912		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2015	Date of Injury:	09/25/1997
Decision Date:	08/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/24/2015

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 71 year old female/male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/25/97. She has reported initial complaints of left upper extremity injury involving the shoulder, arm, elbow, hand and neck. The diagnoses have included left upper extremity repetitive strain injury, left shoulder tendinitis, neck pain, and left wrist tendinitis, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, left DeQuervain's tenosynovitis. Treatment to date has included medications, activity modifications, physical therapy, and other modalities. Currently, as per the physician progress note dated 5/26/15, the injured worker complains of neck, left shoulder, left arm, and left hand pain rated 8/10 on pain scale. The physical exam reveals tenderness about her upper back neck, neck rotation both sides is 15 percent, and shoulder raise is 140 percent with stiffness. There are hypertrophic changes about her knuckles. There is some discomfort with carpal tunnel compression. The current medications included Celebrex, Cosamin, Lidocaine patches, Prilosec, Voltaren gel, Oxycodone/Acetaminophen, Acetaminophen-Codeine, and Dendracin lotion. There is no previous urine drug screen reports noted. The physician requested treatments included Percocet 5/325 MG 30 Count and Lidocaine Patches 30 Count with 1 Refill.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Percocet 5/325 MG 30 Count: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page 74-96.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines cite opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing results or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury of 1997 without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Percocet 5/325 MG 30 Count is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Lidocaine Patches 30 Count with 1 Refill: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Medications, Pages 111- 113.

Decision rationale: Chronic symptoms and clinical findings remain unchanged with medication refilled. The patient exhibits diffuse tenderness and pain on the exam to the spine and extremities. The chance of any type of topical improving generalized symptoms and functionality significantly with such diffuse pain is very unlikely. Topical Lidocaine is indicated for post-herpetic neuralgia, according to the manufacturer. There is no evidence in any of the medical records that this patient has a neuropathic source for the diffuse pain. Without documentation of clear localized, peripheral pain to support treatment with Lidocaine along with functional benefit from treatment already rendered, medical necessity has not been established. There is no documentation of intolerance to oral medication as the patient is also on other oral analgesics. The Lidocaine Patches 30 Count with 1 Refill is not medically necessary and appropriate.