

Case Number:	CM15-0171438		
Date Assigned:	09/11/2015	Date of Injury:	07/09/2010
Decision Date:	11/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/31/2015

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: Arizona, Michigan

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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:

This 45 year old female sustained an industrial injury on 7-09-10. Diagnoses include knee and leg strain and sprain and lumbar strain and sprain. Treatments to date include MRI testing, right knee surgery, at least 12 sessions of physical therapy and prescription pain medications. The injured worker has continued complaints of pain and stiffness in the low back that radiates to the bilateral lower extremities as well as bilateral knee pain. The injured worker has remained off work. The treating physician reports that the injured worker's condition continues to improve. Upon examination, right knee range of motion is reduced. There is tenderness to palpation along the medial and lateral joint lines. Grind and McMurray's testing is positive on the right. A request for Tramadol 50mg #60, Ambien 10mg #30, Anaprox 550mg #60 and Axid 150mg #60 was made by the treating physician.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol 50mg #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, criteria for use, Opioids, specific drug list.

Decision rationale: The MTUS states that Tramadol is a centrally acting synthetic opioid analgesic and it is not recommended as a first-line oral analgesic. Opioids are recommended for chronic pain, especially neuropathic pain that has not responded to first line recommendations like anti-depressants and anti-convulsants. Long term users should be reassessed per specific guideline recommendations and the dose should not be lowered if it is working. Per the MTUS, Tramadol is indicated for moderate to severe pain. A review of the injured workers medical records reveal that the injured worker has chronic moderate pain and is status post knee surgery and appears to be doing well with physical therapy. Since the injured worker appears to be experiencing a progressive improvement in her symptoms, the continued use of Tramadol appears appropriate, therefore the request for Tramadol 50mg #60 is medically necessary.

Ambien 10mg #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) - TWC Pain Procedure Summary last 07/15/2015.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain / Zolpidem.

Decision rationale: The MTUS did not specifically address the use of Ambien, therefore other guidelines were consulted. Per the ODG, Zolpidem is a prescription short-acting non-benzodiazepine hypnotic, which is recommended for short-term (7-10 days) treatment of insomnia. Proper sleep hygiene is critical to the individual with chronic pain and often is hard to obtain. Various medications may provide short-term benefit. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers, and anti-anxiety agents are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. They can be habit-forming, and they may impair function and memory more than opioid pain relievers. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term, however given the risks there is no clear indication for the continued use of this medication in the injured worker, the risks outweigh the benefits and the continued use of Ambien is not medically necessary.

Anaprox 550mg #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS, NSAIDs are recommended at the lowest dose for the shortest period in patients with moderate to severe pain. Acetaminophen may be considered for initial therapy for patients with mild to moderate pain, and in particular, for those with gastrointestinal, cardiovascular or renovascular risk factors. NSAIDs appear to be superior to acetaminophen, particularly for patients with moderate to severe pain. There is no evidence to recommend one drug in this class over another based on efficacy. In particular, there appears to be no difference between traditional NSAIDs and COX-2 NSAIDs in terms of pain relief. The main concern of selection is based on adverse effects. COX-2 NSAIDs have fewer GI side effects at the risk of increased cardiovascular side effects, although the FDA has concluded that long-term clinical trials are best interpreted to suggest that cardiovascular risk occurs with all

NSAIDs and is a class effect (with naproxen being the safest drug). There is no evidence of long-term effectiveness for pain or function. A review of the injured workers medical records reveal that the injured worker has chronic moderate pain and is status post knee surgery and appears to be doing well with physical therapy. Since the injured worker appears to be experiencing a progressive improvement in her symptoms, the continued use of an NSAID appears appropriate; therefore, the request for Anaprox 550mg #60 is medically necessary.

Axid 150mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Mosby's Drug Consult Mosby Inc.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic) / Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs).

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS, Clinicians should weigh the indications for NSAIDs against both GI and cardiovascular risk factors according to specific criteria listed in the MTUS and a selection should be made based on these criteria 1) age > 65 years; (2) history of peptic ulcer, GI bleeding or perforation; (3) concurrent use of ASA, corticosteroids, and/or an anticoagulant; or (4) high dose/multiple NSAID (e.g., NSAID + low-dose ASA). Per the ODG, PPI's are "Recommended for patients at risk for gastrointestinal events. Prilosec (omeprazole), Prevacid (lansoprazole) and Nexium (esomeprazole magnesium) are PPIs. Healing doses of PPIs are more effective than all other therapies, although there is an increase in overall adverse effects compared to placebo. Nexium and Prilosec are very similar molecules. (Donnellan, 2010) In this RCT omeprazole provided a statistically significantly greater acid control than lansoprazole. (Miner, 2010) In general, the use of a PPI should be limited to the recognized indications and used at the lowest dose for the shortest possible amount of time. PPIs are highly effective for their approved indications, including preventing gastric ulcers induced by NSAIDs. Studies suggest, however, that nearly half of all PPI prescriptions are used for unapproved indications or no indications at all. Many prescribers believe that this class of drugs is innocuous, but much information is available to demonstrate otherwise. Products in this drug class have demonstrated equivalent clinical efficacy and safety at comparable doses, including esomeprazole (Nexium), lansoprazole (Prevacid), omeprazole (Prilosec), pantoprazole (Protonix), dexlansoprazole (Dexilant), and rabeprazole (Aciphex). (Shi, 2008) A trial of omeprazole or lansoprazole had been recommended before prescription Nexium therapy (before it went OTC). The other PPIs, Protonix, Dexilant, and Aciphex, should be second-line. According to the latest AHRQ Comparative Effectiveness Research, all of the commercially available PPIs appeared to be similarly effective. (AHRQ, 2011)" A review of the injured workers medical records that are available for my review do not reveal any past or current gastrointestinal complaints that would suggest that the injured worker is at increased risk for a gastrointestinal event, there is also no rationale given for the choice of an H2 blocker as opposed to a PPI as recommended by the guidelines, therefore the request for Axid is not medically necessary.