

Case Number:	CM15-0028371		
Date Assigned:	02/20/2015	Date of Injury:	04/04/2013
Decision Date:	04/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/15/2015

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 38 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on April 4, 2013. The diagnoses have included lumbar sprain/strain and axial low back pain. A progress note dated September 11, 2014 provided the injured worker complains of, back and hand pain rated 7-9/10. She has undergone psychological counseling and physical therapy. On January 16, 2015 utilization review modified a request for 60 tablets of Norco 5/325mg and non-certified a request for compound medication (Gabapentin 10%, Amitriptyline 10%, Bupivacaine 5%) 180grams and compound medication (Flurbiprofen 20%, Baclofen 10%, Dexamethasone 2%) 180 grams. The Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) guidelines were utilized in the determination. Application for independent medical review (IMR) is dated February 15, 2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

60 Tablets of Norco 5/325mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

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

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, 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 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 without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The 60 Tablets of Norco 5/325mg is not medically necessary and appropriate.

**1 Compound Medication (Gabapentin 10%, Amitriptyline 10%, Bupivacaine 5%)
180grams:** Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics, page(s) 111-113; Anti-Epilepsy Drugs/Gabapentin, pages 18-19.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines, the efficacy in clinical trials for topical analgesic treatment modality has been inconsistent and most studies are small and of short duration. These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. There is little evidence to utilize topical compound analgesic over oral NSAIDs or other pain relievers for a patient with multiple joint pain without contraindication in taking oral medications. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication or medical need for this topical analgesic to include a compounded anti-epileptic over oral formulation for this chronic injury without documented functional improvement from treatment already rendered. Guidelines do not recommend long-term use of this anti-seizure medications for this chronic injury without improved functional outcomes attributable to their use. The 1 Compound Medication (Gabapentin 10%, Amitriptyline 10%, Bupivacaine 5%) 180 grams is not medically necessary and appropriate.

1 Compound Medication (Flurbiprofen 20%, Baclofen 10%, Dexamethasone 2%) 180 grams: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesic.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics, page(s) 111-113.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines, the efficacy in clinical trials for topical analgesic treatment modality has been inconsistent and most studies are small and of short duration. These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. There is little evidence to utilize topical compound analgesic over oral NSAIDs or other pain relievers for a patient with multiple joint pain without contraindication in taking oral medications. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication or medical need for this topical analgesic to include a compounded NSAID and muscle relaxant over oral formulation for this chronic injury without documented functional improvement from treatment already rendered. Guidelines do not recommend long-term use of NSAID without improved functional outcomes attributable to their use. Additionally, Guidelines do not recommend long-term use of this muscle relaxant medication for this chronic injury without improved functional outcomes attributable to their use. The 1 Compound Medication (Flurbiprofen 20%, Baclofen 10%, Dexamethasone 2%) 180 grams is not medically necessary and appropriate.