

Case Number:	CM15-0028494		
Date Assigned:	02/20/2015	Date of Injury:	09/24/2008
Decision Date:	04/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/16/2015

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 York, Tennessee
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Emergency 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 39 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/24/08. She has reported pain in the lower back, neck and right shoulder. The diagnoses have included right shoulder pain, brachial neuralgia, lumbar disc syndrome and L5-S1 disc bulge. Treatment to date has included lumbar MRI 2012, physical therapy, chiropractic sessions, L5 epidural injections and oral medications. As of the PR2 dated 11/17/14, the injured worker reports pain across her lower back that radiates to the bilateral lower extremities. She indicated that she is not taking any prescribed pain medication nor uses any type of support. The treating physician requested Flexeril 10mg #30. On 2/12/15 Utilization Review modified a request for Flexeril 10mg #30 to Flexeril 10mg #20. The utilization review physician cited the ODG guidelines for muscle relaxants. On 2/16/15, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of Flexeril 10mg #30.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flexeril 10mg 1 by mouth at bedtime as needed #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants (for pain). Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines-TWC Pain Procedure Summary (updated 01/19/15), non-sedating muscle relaxants.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 63.

Decision rationale: Flexeril is the muscle relaxant cyclobenzaprine. Cyclobenzaprine is recommended as an option, for a short course of therapy. It has been found to be more effective than placebo with greater adverse side effects. Its greatest effect is in the first 4 days. Treatment should be brief. Non-sedating muscle relaxants are recommended with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment (less than two weeks) of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. Per peer review the patient has been using flexeril intermittently for 2 years. In this case, it was requested for use once daily. The duration of requested treatment surpasses the recommended short-term duration of two weeks. The request should not be authorized.