

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0042271		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	03/12/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/06/1996
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/22/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	02/26/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/05/2015

### 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, Michigan, 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 58 year old male who sustained a work related injury June 6, 1996. Past history included cervical spinal surgery and right lower extremity vascular surgery, November, 2014. According to a treating physician's progress report dated February 6, 2015, the injured worker resented with chronic bilateral neck pain, which is improving with treatment, but does have occasional flares of pain. There are also complaints of bilateral lower extremity weakness with edema and numbness in the bilateral upper extremities with tingling, which interferes with sleep. He ambulates normally without an assistive device. Diagnoses included degenerative lumbar intervertebral disc, cervical post-laminectomy syndrome; chronic pain syndrome, and undifferentiated somatoform disorder. Treatment plan included to continue follow-up with various physician's including psychiatrist, internist, and vascular surgeon, resume walking program, instructed to take controlled substance medication only as directed and stored in original bottles in a locked cabinet or where they cannot be easily accessed by others.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol ER 100mg #60:** 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 Tramadol  
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**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. There is no clear documentation of pain and functional improvement with previous use of Ultram. There is no documentation for compliance of the patient with his medications and a continuous monitoring of side effects. There is no documentation of the medical necessity of Tramadol. Therefore, the prescription of Tramadol ER 100mg #60 is not medically necessary.