

Case Number:	CM15-0065281		
Date Assigned:	04/13/2015	Date of Injury:	06/16/2009
Decision Date:	05/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/25/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/06/2015

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 37 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 06/16/2009. The injured worker is currently diagnosed as having recurrent extrusion at L5-S1, left L5-S1 radiculopathy, status post lumbar laminectomy surgeries, left lower extremity radicular pain and paresthesia, lower extremity hyperreflexia, sleep disorder, and chronic pain with anxiety and depression. Treatment to date has included spinal fusion surgery, lumbar spine MRI, physical therapy, electromyography/nerve conduction studies, and medications. In a progress note dated 02/24/2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of constant aching pain in the low back with associated spasms. The treating physician reported requesting authorization for Tylenol #4.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acetaminophen/Codeine #4 60/300mg; QTY: 1.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 91.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 76-79.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Tylenol #4 (Tylenol with Codeine) as well as other short acting opioids are indicated for intermittent or breakthrough pain (page 75). It can be used in acute post operative pain. It is not recommended for chronic pain of long-term use as prescribed in this case. 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. 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 documentation of reduction and functional improvement with previous use of Tylenol with Codeine. There is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement with previous use of opioids. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the patient with his medications. Therefore, the prescription of Acetaminophen/Codeine #4 60/300 mg is not medically necessary.