

Case Number:	CM15-0071982		
Date Assigned:	04/22/2015	Date of Injury:	08/11/2008
Decision Date:	05/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/15/2015

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: Indiana

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:

The injured worker is a 63 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on August 11, 2008. He has reported low back pain and has been diagnosed with discogenic lumbar condition with at two level disc disease with bulging above at L3-4 status post two interventional treatments which is transforaminal at L5 in 2012 and in 2014 onto the right of midline at L4-5 and L5-S1. Treatment has included injections, medications, hot and cold wrap, and a TENS unit. Currently the injured worker had tenderness across the lumbar paraspinal muscles and pain with facet locking. The treatment request included tramadol and protonix.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol (Ultram ER) 150mg #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use; Opioids, specific drug list; Weaning of Medications Page(s): 76-80, 93, 94, 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids; Tramadol Page(s): 74-123. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability

Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic) - Medications for acute pain (analgesics), Tramadol (Ultram®).

Decision rationale: Ultram is the brand name version of tramadol, which is classified as central acting synthetic opioids. MTUS states regarding tramadol that "a therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." ODG further states, "Tramadol is not recommended as a first-line oral analgesic because of its inferior efficacy to a combination of Hydrocodone/acetaminophen." The treating physician did not provide sufficient documentation that the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics at the time of prescription or in subsequent medical notes. Additionally, no documentation was provided which discussed the setting of goals for the use of tramadol prior to the initiation of this medication. The original utilization review recommended weaning and modified the request, which is appropriate. As such, the request is not medically necessary.

Pantoprazole (Protonix) 20mg, #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk Page(s): 68-69.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDS; GI discomfort Page(s): 68-69. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic), NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk.

Decision rationale: Protonix is the brand name version of Pantoprazole, which is a proton pump inhibitor. MTUS states, "Determine if the patient is at risk for gastrointestinal events: (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)." And "Patients at intermediate risk for gastrointestinal events and no cardiovascular disease: (1) A non-selective NSAID with either a PPI (Proton Pump Inhibitor, for example, 20 mg omeprazole daily) or misoprostol (200 mg four times daily) or (2) a Cox-2 selective agent. Long-term PPI use (> 1 year) has been shown to increase the risk of hip fracture (adjusted odds ratio 1.44)." ODG states, "If a PPI is used, omeprazole OTC tablets or lansoprazole 24HR OTC are recommended for an equivalent clinical efficacy and significant cost savings. 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 is recommended before Nexium therapy. The other PPIs, Protonix, Dexilant, and Aciphex, should also be second-line. According to the latest AHRQ Comparative Effectiveness Research, all of the commercially available PPIs appeared to be similarly effective." (AHRQ, 2011)The patient does not meet the age recommendations for increased GI risk. The medical documents provided establish the patient has experienced GI discomfort, but is nonspecific and does not indicate history of peptic ulcer, GI bleeding or perforation. Medical records do not indicate that the patient is on ASA, corticosteroids, and/or an anticoagulant; or high dose/multiple NSAID. Additionally per guidelines, Pantoprazole is considered second line

therapy and the treating physician has not provided detailed documentation of a failed trial of omeprazole and/or lansoprazole. As such, the request is not medically necessary.