

Case Number:	CM15-0073005		
Date Assigned:	04/23/2015	Date of Injury:	03/19/2007
Decision Date:	05/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/16/2015

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 Jersey, Alabama, 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 30 year old male with an industrial injury dated March 19, 2007. The injured worker diagnoses include chronic L4-L5 disk herniation with mass effect on the exiting L5 nerve root with flare-up of radicular symptoms and neuropathic pain. He has been treated with prescribed medications, home exercise therapy and periodic follow up visits. According to the progress note dated 3/9/2015, the injured worker reported worsening back pain with severe spasms and shooting pain down right leg with burning sensation. The injured worker rated pain an 8/10, at best 4/10 with medications and 10/10 without medications. Objective findings revealed muscle spasms in the lumbar trunk with antalgic posture, leaning to the right forward flex. Positive straight leg raises, absent right Achilles reflex, and decrease sensation at the right lateral calf and bottom of foot were also noted on exam. The treating physician prescribed Oxycodone IR 30 mg #30.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Oxycodone IR 30 mg #30: Upheld

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

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, Oxycodone 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. 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 for the need for continuous use of Oxycodone. There is no documentation for functional improvement with previous use of opioids. There is no documentation of compliance of the patient with his medications. Based on the above, the prescription of Oxycodone IR 30 mg #30 is not medically necessary.