

Case Number:	CM15-0075093		
Date Assigned:	04/24/2015	Date of Injury:	12/29/2010
Decision Date:	05/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/20/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 49 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on December 29, 2010. She has reported neck pain and low back pain and has been diagnosed with lumbar degenerative disc disease, low back pain, lumbar radiculopathy, cervical degenerative disc disease, neck pain, and cervical radiculopathy. Treatment has included medications, acupuncture, and epidural steroid injections. Currently the injured worker complains of neck pain with radiation to the right upper extremity associated with numbness, tingling, and weakness in the right hand. Low back pain radiated to the right lower extremity into the anterior thigh. The treatment request included Cymbalta 60 mg.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cymbalta 60 mg, 1 tablet every day #30 with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 15; 78.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-depressants, Page 15.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Treatment Pain Guidelines, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as Cymbalta (Duloxetine, a class of antidepressants that inhibit serotonin reuptake without action on noradrenaline), are controversial based on controlled trials. It has been suggested that the main role of SSRIs may be in addressing psychological symptoms associated with chronic pain; however, more information is needed regarding the role of SSRIs and pain. Duloxetine (Cymbalta) is FDA-approved for anxiety, depression, diabetic neuropathy, and fibromyalgia; Used off-label for neuropathic pain and radiculopathy; and is recommended as a first-line option for diabetic neuropathy; however, no high quality evidence is reported to support the use of duloxetine for musculoskeletal disorders and more studies are needed to determine the efficacy of duloxetine for other types of neuropathic pain. Submitted reports have not adequately shown any previous failed trial of TCA or other first-line medications without specific functional improvement from treatment already rendered and certified previously. The Cymbalta 60 mg, 1 tablet every day #30 with 2 refills is not medically necessary and appropriate.