

Case Number:	CM15-0075625		
Date Assigned:	04/27/2015	Date of Injury:	08/30/2004
Decision Date:	05/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/21/2015

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 60-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 08/30/2004. He has reported injury to the right knee. The diagnoses have included right knee end-stage osteoarthropathy; and status post remote right knee arthroscopy times two. Treatment to date has included medications, diagnostics, injections, lumbar-sacral orthosis, TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit, physical therapy, surgical intervention, and home exercise program. Medications have included Tramadol, Cyclobenzaprine, and Pantoprazole. A progress note from the treating physician, dated 03/04/2015, documented an evaluation with the injured worker. Currently, the injured worker complains of right knee pain; pain is rated 7/10 on the visual analog scale; and current medications facilitate maintenance of activities of daily living and ability to adhere to recommended exercise regime. Objective findings included diffuse tenderness of the right knee; the tenderness is greatest at the medial and lateral joint line; favors left lower extremity with ambulation; and spasm of the right calf musculature. The treatment plan has included the request for Tramadol HCl 150mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol HCL 150mg # 60: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Tramadol HCL 150mg # 60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.