

Case Number:	CM15-0076533		
Date Assigned:	04/28/2015	Date of Injury:	11/09/1995
Decision Date:	06/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/13/2015
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: North Carolina
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This 57-year-old man sustained an industrial injury on 11/9/1995. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Evaluations include cervical and lumbar spine MRIs dated 3/18/2013. Diagnoses include cervical disc with radiculitis, lumbar disc with radiculitis, degeneration of cervical disc, degeneration of lumbar disc, neck pain, low back pain, and shoulder pain. Treatment has included oral medication, lumbar epidural steroid injections, and surgical intervention. Physician notes dated 4/6/2015 show complaints of chronic spinal pain. Recommendations include Ibuprofen, Gabapentin, Melatonin, functional rehabilitation program, and follow up in two months.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Gabapentin capsule 100mg QID 30 days #120 with 1 refills: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines gabapentin Page(s): 18.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on Neurontin states: Gabapentin (Neurontin, Gabarone, generic available) has been shown to be effective for treatment of diabetic painful neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia and has been considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. (Backonja, 2002) (ICSI, 2007) (Knotkova, 2007) (Eisenberg, 2007) (Attal, 2006) This RCT concluded that gabapentin monotherapy appears to be efficacious for the treatment of pain and sleep interference associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy and exhibits positive effects on mood and quality of life. (Backonja, 1998) It has been given FDA approval for treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia. The number needed to treat (NNT) for overall neuropathic pain is 4. It has a more favorable side-effect profile than Carbamazepine, with a number needed to harm of 2.5. (Wiffen2-Cochrane, 2005) (Zaremba, 2006) Gabapentin in combination with morphine has been studied for treatment of diabetic neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia. When used in combination the maximum tolerated dosage of both drugs was lower than when each was used as a single agent and better analgesia occurred at lower doses of each. (Gilron-NEJM, 2005) Recommendations involving combination therapy require further study. The patient has the diagnosis of neuropathic pain in the form of cervical radiculopathy. Therefore, the request is necessary and approved.