

Case Number:	CM15-0090674		
Date Assigned:	05/15/2015	Date of Injury:	08/21/1997
Decision Date:	06/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/11/2015

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:

The injured worker is a 55 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 8/21/97. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic lumbosacral spinal pain and cervical spinal pain status post fusion for spondylolisthesis. Currently, the injured worker was with complaints of neck pain described as throbbing, tingling and numbness as well as back stiffness with radicular symptoms in the right leg and hip. Previous treatments included medication management, facet injections, and status post fusion and revision surgery. Previous diagnostic studies included magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography myelogram. The injured workers pain level was noted as 6/10. Objective examination was notable for pain with palpation over C2-C3, C3-C4 and C4-C5 facet capsules, L5 and L4 dermatome with decreased light touch sensation. The plan of care was for medication prescriptions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Amitriptyline 25 mg #30 with 3 refills: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), pain (chronic), weaning of medications, mental illness and stress.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines amitriptyline Page(s): 15.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS section on the requested medication states: Tricyclic antidepressants are recommended over selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), unless adverse reactions are a problem. Caution is required because tricyclics have a low threshold for toxicity, and tricyclic antidepressant overdose is a significant cause of fatal drug poisoning due to their cardiovascular and neurological effects. Tricyclic antidepressants have been shown in both a meta-analysis (McQuay, 1996) and a systematic review (Collins, 2000) to be effective, and are considered a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. (Namaka, 2004) (Dworkin, 2003) (Gilron, 2006) (Wolfe, 2004) (Dworkin, 2007) (Saarto-Cochrane, 2007) This class of medications works in both patients with normal mood and patients with depressed mood when used in treatment for neuropathic pain. (Sindrup, 2005) Indications in controlled trials have shown effectiveness in treating central post-stroke pain, post-herpetic neuralgia (Argoff, 2004), painful diabetic and non-diabetic polyneuropathy, and post-mastectomy pain. Negative results were found for spinal cord pain and phantom-limb pain, but this may have been due to study design. (Finnerup, 2005) Tricyclics have not demonstrated significance in randomized-control trials in treating HIV neuropathy, spinal cord injury, cisplatin neuropathy, neuropathic cancer pain, phantom limb pain or chronic lumbar root pain. (Dworkin, 2007) One review reported the NNT for at least moderate neuropathic pain relief with tricyclics is 3.6 (3-4.5), with the NNT for amitriptyline being 3.1 (2.5-4.2). The NNT for venlafaxine, calculated using 3 studies, was reported to be 3.1 (2.2-5.1). (Saarto-Cochrane, 2007) Another review reported that the NNT for 50% improvement in neuropathic pain was 2 to 3 for tricyclic antidepressants, 4 for venlafaxine, and 7 for SSRIs (Perrot, 2008). The patient has neuropathic pain and this is a first line treatment choice. Therefore the request is certified. Therefore, the requested treatment is not medically necessary.