

Case Number:	CM15-0092239		
Date Assigned:	05/20/2015	Date of Injury:	12/07/2012
Decision Date:	06/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/13/2015

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 66 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12/07/12. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications, epidural steroid injections, and bilateral cervical and right lumbar radiofrequency nerve ablations (neurotomy/rhizotomy) and facet injections. Diagnostic studies are not addressed. Current complaints include bilateral neck pain. Current diagnoses include cervical and lumbar facet joint arthropathy, cervical and lumbar sprain/strain, bilateral knee pain, right shoulder pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, and right cervical and lumbar facet joint pain. In a progress note dated 10/16/14 the treating provider reports the plan of care as a right C5-7 facet joint radiofrequency nerve ablation, and medications including Naproxen and Cyclobenzaprine. The requested treatments include Naproxen and Cyclobenzaprine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cyclobenzaprine 10mg #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines muscle relaxants Page(s): 63-65.

Decision rationale: The requested Flector 1.3% patch (apply for 12 hours per day as needed), #30, is not medically necessary. CA MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Topical Analgesics, Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents, Page 111-112, recommend topical analgesics with documented osteoarthritis with intolerance to oral anti-inflammatory agents; Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, GI symptoms and cardiovascular risk, Page 68-69, note that all NSAIDs have the potential to raise blood pressure in susceptible patients. The injured worker has tenderness of the lumbar paravertebral muscles with hypertonicity and spasm; positive left straight leg raise; tenderness noted over the coccyx sacroiliac spine; swelling at the surgical scar on the left groin; restricted range of motion of the left hip; tenderness noted over the groin, sacroiliac joint, and trochanter; motor testing limited by pain; decreased light touch sensation over L5 and S1 dermatomes on the left). The treating physician has not documented the patient's intolerance of these or similar medications to be taken on an oral basis, nor objective evidence of functional improvement from any previous use. The criteria noted above not having been met, Flector 1.3% patch (apply for 12 hours per day as needed), #30 is not medically necessary.

Naproxen 550mg #60: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs Page(s): 68-72.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on NSAID therapy states: Recommended at the lowest dose for the shortest period in patients with moderate to severe pain. Acetaminophen may be considered for initial therapy for patients with mild to moderate pain, and in particular, for those with gastrointestinal, cardiovascular or renovascular risk factors. NSAIDs appear to be superior to acetaminophen, particularly for patients with moderate to severe pain. There is no evidence to recommend one drug in this class over another based on efficacy. In particular, there appears to be no difference between traditional NSAIDs and COX-2 NSAIDs in terms of pain relief. The main concern of selection is based on adverse effects. COX-2 NSAIDs have fewer GI side effects at the risk of increased cardiovascular side effects, although the FDA has concluded that long-term clinical trials are best interpreted to suggest that cardiovascular risk occurs with all NSAIDs and is a class effect (with naproxyn being the safest drug). There is no evidence of long-term effectiveness for pain or function. (Chen, 2008) (Laine, 2008) Back Pain Chronic low back pain: Recommended as an option for short-term symptomatic relief. A Cochrane review of the literature on drug relief for low back pain (LBP) suggested that NSAIDs were no more effective than other drugs such as acetaminophen, narcotic analgesics, and muscle relaxants. The review also found that NSAIDs had more adverse effects than placebo and acetaminophen but fewer effects than muscle relaxants and narcotic analgesics. In addition, evidence from the review suggested that no one NSAID, including COX-2 inhibitors, was clearly more effective than another. (Roelofs-

Cochrane, 2008) See also Anti-inflammatory medications. Neuropathic pain: There is inconsistent evidence for the use of these medications to treat long term neuropathic pain, but they may be useful to treat breakthrough and mixed pain conditions such as osteoarthritis (and other nociceptive pain) in with neuropathic pain. This medication is recommended for the shortest period of time and at the lowest dose possible. The dosing of this medication is within the California MTUS guideline recommendations. The definition of shortest period possible is not clearly defined in the California MTUS. Therefore, the request is medically necessary.