

Case Number:	CM15-0092433		
Date Assigned:	05/18/2015	Date of Injury:	11/30/2008
Decision Date:	06/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/15/2015
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: 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 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/30/2008. The mechanism of injury was not noted. The injured worker was diagnosed as having status post total knee arthroplasty, status post infection and washout, unstable right total knee, left knee sprain/strain, and lumbar sprain/strain. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, right knee surgery (date not specified), physical therapy, and medications. Currently, the injured worker complains of persistent pain in the low back (rated 7/10), and frequent and constant pain in the bilateral knees (rated 7-8/10). His left knee was unchanged from the last visit and he stated his right knee had some swelling, was hot to touch, and slightly red. Exam noted absent erythema, but he stated that it happens occasionally and was prescribed antibiotics by his primary physician. His pain was better with rest and medications and worsened by activity. Medications included Tramadol and Prilosec. Tramadol decreased pain from 8/10 to 5/10 and Prilosec was used due to a history of gastrointestinal upset with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug use. He was currently not working modified duties. Exam of the lumbar spine noted decreased range of motion, tenderness over the paraspinals bilaterally, and decreased sensation at L4 and L5. Exam of the left knee noted decreased range of motion with crepitation. Exam of the right knee noted a well healed incision and decreased range of motion. The treatment plan included continued medications, noting no signs of abuse or adverse reactions. The use of Tramadol was noted since 2/24/2015, at which time Motrin was discontinued.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ultram (Tramadol) 50mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78, 93-94, 68.

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 Ultram (Tramadol) 50mg #90 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Prilosec (Omeprazole 20mg) #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk Page(s): 68.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI Symptoms and Cardiovascular risk, Pages 68-69.

Decision rationale: Review indicates the patient has previous "GI upset" with use of NSAIDs needing Prilosec; however, records show Motrin was discontinued in February of 2015. Prilosec (Omeprazole) medication is for treatment of the problems associated with erosive esophagitis from GERD, or in patients with hypersecretion diseases. Per MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, the patient does not meet criteria for Omeprazole (Prilosec) namely reserved for patients with history of prior GI bleeding, the elderly (over 65 years), diabetics, and chronic cigarette smokers. Submitted reports have not described or provided any GI diagnosis that meets the criteria to indicate medical treatment. Review of the records show no documentation of any specific symptoms, or confirmed GI diagnosis to warrant this medication, nor is the patient currently taking any NSAIDs. The Prilosec (Omeprazole 20mg) #30 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

