

Case Number:	CM15-0095996		
Date Assigned:	05/22/2015	Date of Injury:	07/21/1967
Decision Date:	06/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/19/2015

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: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive Medicine

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 48-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/22/1990 to present. He reported repetitive activity trauma. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic pain, other, lumbar radiculopathy, and status post lumbar fusion (L3-4, L4-5, L5-S1). Treatment to date has included diagnostics, physical therapy, acupuncture, lumbar spinal surgery in 10/2011, and medications. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain, with radiation down both lower extremities, accompanied by constant numbness to the level of the knees. Pain was rated 6/10 with medications and 9/10 without. Pain was reported to have recently worsened, improved with bed-rest and medications. He reported frequent gastrointestinal upset and occasional nausea. His work status was permanent and stationary and he was not working. Physical exam noted spasm in the paraspinal musculature L3-S1, tenderness to palpation, limited range of motion, decreased sensation along the L3-4 dermatome in the right lower extremity, and positive straight leg raise on the right. Medications included MS Contin CR, Tizanidine, Amitriptyline, Omeprazole, and Morphine ER. The use of Tizanidine was noted since at least 6/2013. The treatment plan included medication renewals, including Tizanidine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tizanidine 4mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants, Zanaflex Page(s): 63-67.

Decision rationale: Zanaflex is the brand name version of tizanidine, which is a muscle relaxant. MTUS states concerning muscle relaxants "Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. (Homik, 2004) Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. Drugs with the most limited published evidence in terms of clinical effectiveness include chlorzoxazone, methocarbamol, dantrolene and baclofen. (Chou, 2004) According to a recent review in American Family Physician, skeletal muscle relaxants are the most widely prescribed drug class for musculoskeletal conditions (18.5% of prescriptions), and the most commonly prescribed antispasmodic agents are carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine, metaxalone, and methocarbamol, but despite their popularity, skeletal muscle relaxants should not be the primary drug class of choice for musculoskeletal conditions. (See 2, 2008)" MTUS further states, "Tizanidine (Zanaflex, generic available) is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. (Malanga, 2008) Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. (Chou, 2007) One study (conducted only in females) demonstrated a significant decrease in pain associated with chronic myofascial pain syndrome and the authors recommended its use as a first line option to treat myofascial pain. (Malanga, 2002) May also provide benefit as an adjunct treatment for fibromyalgia." (ICSI, 2007) The medical documents indicate that patient is far in excess of the initial treatment window and period. This patient has been on Tizanidine for over a year, far in excess of guideline recommendations. Medical documents do not fully detail the components outlined in the guidelines above and do not establish the need for long term/chronic usage of Tizanidine. As such, the request for Tizanidine 4mg #90 is not medically necessary.