

Case Number:	CM15-0097498		
Date Assigned:	05/28/2015	Date of Injury:	03/07/2013
Decision Date:	07/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/20/2015

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 61-year-old female with an industrial injury dated 3/07/2013. The injured worker's diagnoses include right knee osteoarthopathy, right knee degenerative medial meniscal tear, left knee internal derangement and low back pain with lower extremity symptoms. Treatment consisted of diagnostic studies, prescribed medications, and periodic follow up visits. In a progress note dated 4/6/2015, the injured worker reported bilateral knee pain and low back pain with lower extremity symptoms. The injured worker rated right knee pain 8/10, left knee pain 7/10 and low back pain 6/10. Objective findings revealed diffuse tenderness of the bilateral knee, crepitus with range of motion, bilateral positive straight leg raises and spasm of the lumboparaspinal musculature. The treating physician prescribed Gabapentin 6% in base, 300 grams (compound medication) with 3 refills now under review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Gabapentin 6% in base, 300 grams (compound medication) with 3 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on topical analgesics states: Recommended as an option as indicated below. Largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. (Namaka, 2004) These agents are applied locally to painful areas with advantages that include lack of systemic side effects, absence of drug interactions, and no need to titrate. (Colombo, 2006) Many agents are compounded as monotherapy or in combination for pain control (including NSAIDs, opioids, capsaicin, local anesthetics, antidepressants, glutamate receptor antagonists, adrenergic receptor agonist, adenosine, cannabinoids, cholinergic receptor agonists, agonists, prostanoids, bradykinin, adenosine triphosphate, biogenic amines, and nerve growth factor). (Argoff, 2006) There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended."The requested medication contains ingredients, which are not indicated per the California MTUS for topical analgesic use. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.