MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0099641		
Date Assigned:	06/02/2015	Date of Injury:	07/05/2013
Decision Date:	07/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/22/2015

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, Texas, Florida
Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management, Hospice & Palliative 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 31-year-old male, who sustained an industrial/work injury on 7/5/13. He reported initial complaints of left knee pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having synovitis and lateral patellar instability/subluxation, lumbago, and cervicalgia. Treatment to date has included medication, diagnostics, surgery (left knee arthroscopy with complete synovectomy with redo on 9/2/14, and physical therapy with home exercises. MRI results were reported on 8/30/13 that demonstrated large joint effusion secondary to a synovial proliferate process such as pigmented villonodular synovitis, question mild erosive changes and reactive marrow changes in the tibial plateau, somewhat worse from prior study, and no evidence of significant injury. Currently, the injured worker complains of back, knee, and neck pain reported as 4/10. Continued to use crutch to walk with cold weather making pain worse. Per the primary physician's progress report (PR-2) on 4/7/15, examination noted antalgic gait, minimal effort with transfers, and slight limitation in the left knee. Current plan of care included diagnostic drug testing and medication for pain management. The requested treatments include Tramadol 100mg.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tramadol 100mg #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 119. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), ODG formulary.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792. 20 - 9792. 26 Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for tramadol, California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that Ultram is an opiate pain medication. Due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the medication is improving the patient's function or pain (in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS), no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In light of the above issues, the currently requested tramadol, is not medically necessary.