



## The race for dispensary margins

Between May and August, dispensing practices have run a close race against pharmacists to achieve the best parallel import prices. As imports become used more widely, it is possible that suppliers may stop differentiating between the two types of buyer and simply offer the same prices across the board.

In the generics market dispensing doctors continue to achieve better purchase prices, as they have done for many years. Looking at the market during September, key risers included three packs of valsartan caps, and two each of moxonidine and oxazepam tabs. Valsartan (40mg x7) also featured among the fallers, alongside two each of isosorbide mononitrate, levofloxacin, and temazepam tabs 10mg x500.

### Fallers

In detail: levofloxacin tabs 250mg x5 saw an average price reduction of 61 per cent as Actavis reduced prices to both pharmacists and dispensing doctors. Other companies making reductions included Phoenix, Numark and Mawdsleys. Offer prices below £1.00 were available to both sets of customers from Mawdsleys, Numark, B&S, Actavis, Teva, Phoenix, Eclipse and Elite.

Levofloxacin tabs 250mg x10 has seen drug tariff price reductions every month since February, which means the market has had to follow suit, but companies have not found it easy to get their prices right. Companies reducing prices in September included AAH, Actavis, and Ethigen, and suppliers with prices below £1.20 included Numark, AAH and Phoenix.

Wide-ranging price cuts were the order of the day in both August and September for the 40mg x56 pack of isosorbide mononitrate after prices peaked in June. The best prices below £2.00 were on offer from Islestone, Trident, AAH, Ethigen, B&S, Mawdsleys and Lexon.

### Risers

In September the Scottish drug tariff for amitriptyline tabs 50mg x28 rose from £1.05 to £3.44; with NCSO price concessions for pharmacists of £3.44 in August and September, suppliers to the Scottish market quickly followed suit, and increased prices. Elsewhere, prices continued their nine month rise; the resulting 485 per cent increase in the September average price left the best deals below £3.00 available from Beta, Phoenix, Numark, Lexon, Cavendish, OTC Direct, Elite, Mawdsleys, Ethigen, Trident, Teva, Eclipse and AAH.

Oxazepam tabs 10mg x28 rose by 319 per cent on average as Actavis increased prices. With no increase in the drug tariff price or NCSO listing, it may be that Actavis knows something the rest of the market has yet to learn. The best September prices below £0.70 were available from DE, Numark, Eclipse, AAH, Trident, Beta and Ethigen.

Similar price rises were seen for oxazepam tabs 15mg x28 as the average price rose by 279 per cent. The best offers below £0.70 were available from AAH, Eclipse, OTC Direct, Numark, Ethigen, Beta and Trident.