

# Irish prices provide atorvastatin margins

Initial reimbursement reference prices for atorvastatin set by Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE) have left ample scope for pharmacists to make healthy profit margins on the cholesterol-lowering agent, according to an analysis conducted for **Generics bulletin** by pricing-information specialist WaveData.

Irish reference prices for atorvastatin came into effect on 1 November last year (**Generics bulletin**, 15 November 2013, page 17). These were based on a list of interchangeable atorvastatin medicines produced by the Irish Medicines Board (IMB) in August 2013. The IMB has since produced similar lists for esomeprazole, felodipine/ramipril, lansoprazole and lercanidipine, as well as for omeprazole, pantoprazole, pravastatin, quetiapine, ramipril and rosuvastatin.

For each atorvastatin strength, the HSE has listed as potential choices Pfizer's Lipitor original, as well as the branded generics Atorvas from Sandoz' partner Rowex, Torvacol from Stada's Clonmel and Torvan from Wockhardt's Pinewood. Company-branded atorvastatin tablets are listed from Actavis, Mylan's Gerard Laboratories, Krka, Pfizer, Pinewood and Teva. Dexcel and Unichem's Niche Generics have options for all but the 80mg strength.

Regardless of which brand of atorvastatin an Irish pharmacist chooses to dispense, the HSE has agreed to pay set amounts for 28-

tablet packs. These reimbursement levels are €3.47 (US\$4.73) for the 10mg strength and €5.46 for the 20mg version, while the respective fees for the 40mg and 80mg strengths are €9.14 and €10.53.

But as can be seen from Figure 1, Irish pharmacists have been able to make a handsome margin over the average trade prices for atorvastatin, as measured by WaveData.

For the 10mg tablets, the average trade price rose by almost a quarter between October and November to reach €1.71 as the reference prices came into effect. This provided pharmacists with a profit margin of 51%. And by shopping around for the lowest price of €0.77 per pack, pharmacists could achieve a margin in November of 78%.

Bargains proved harder to find in December, as WaveData recorded a best offer of €0.98 for the 10mg tablets. However, this still represented a margin of 72%, compared to an average margin of 69%, based on an average price of €1.09 per pack.

Similar trends were seen for the 20mg and 40mg strengths, as the average and lowest prices converged in December at around €1.60 and €2.70 respectively. After several months of relative price stability, the average price of the 80mg strength tumbled by more than a quarter to €3.34 in December, only 12% higher than the €2.98 lowest price available (see Figure 2).

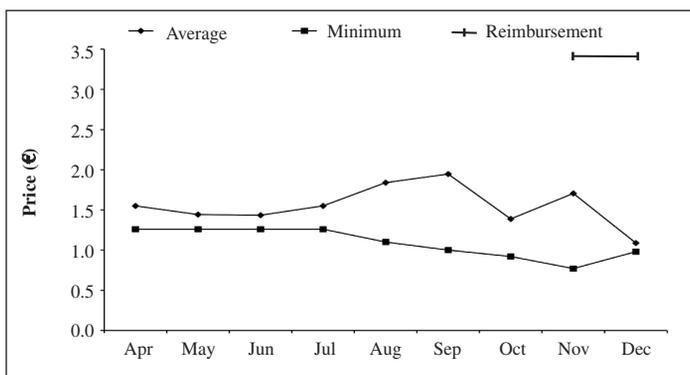


Figure 1: Reimbursement, average trade and lowest trade prices for 28-tablet packs of atorvastatin 10mg in Ireland between April and December 2013 (Source – WaveData)

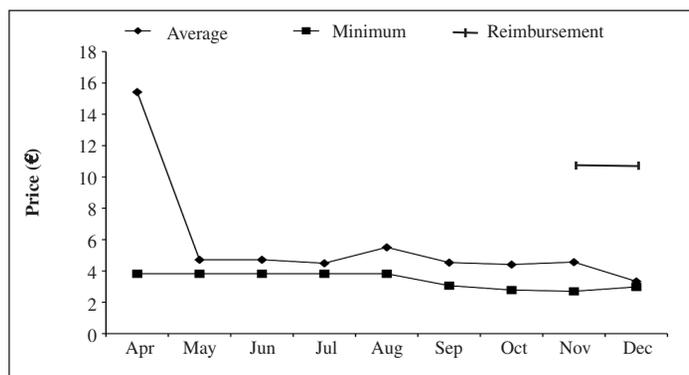


Figure 2: Reimbursement, average trade and lowest trade prices for 28-tablet packs of atorvastatin 80mg in Ireland between April and December 2013 (Source – WaveData)