

Lamotrigine price decays like all the rest

Lamotrigine was in the news again recently when the French medicines agency, Afssaps, decided there was no evidence to suggest that switching epilepsy patients to generic medicines increased the risk of seizures. Three years ago, when GlaxoSmithKline's Lamictal lost its patent protection in the UK, the Department of Health was obliged to combat misinformation in the marketplace by pointing out the same thing.

The early difficulties in the UK seemed to affect lamotrigine's market price such that in the early weeks after launch in May 2005, prices did not seem to fall as quickly as might have been expected from the degree of interest in the ingredient from generics firms.

Three years on, it seems that the early controversy has been forgotten, at least as far as market prices are concerned. Average prices to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors, relative to the brand's trade price, are as low now for lamotrigine – up to 95% discount to the brand – as for any other important generic drug. As Figures 1-4 show, the average price declines for the four strengths of plain tablets were very similar in form, reaching a baseline around November 2006, about 18 months after launch.

The lowest average prices for the four strengths have occurred at different times more recently, however. The average price of the 25mg strength offered the highest 95% discount to brand trade price in October 2007, when the generic cost £1.27 (US\$2.54) compared with the Lamictal equivalent at £20.41. Similarly, there was a 95% discount for 50mg in June 2007, 95% for 100mg in September 2007 and 94% for 200mg in February 2008. Meanwhile, the number of suppliers to independent pharmacists recorded by WaveData fluctuated quite widely (see Figure 5), although it should be noted that the data reflects positive price offers; if a supplier fails to circulate a price in one month, it is not recorded.

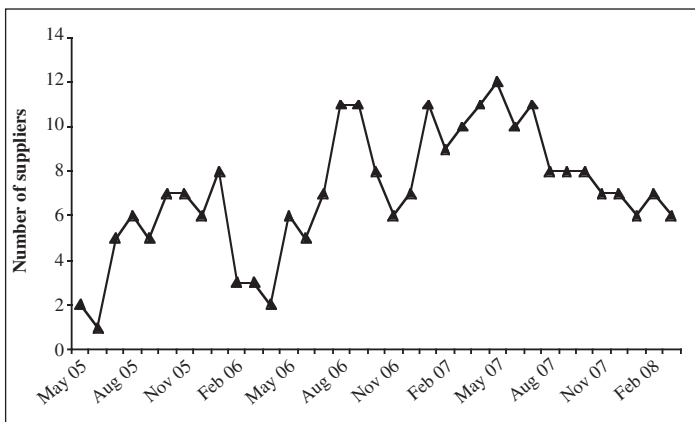


Figure 5: Number of suppliers of lamotrigine in various strengths to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors (Source – WaveData)

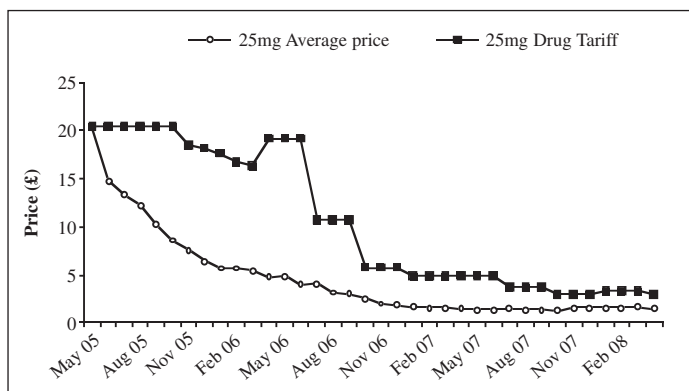


Figure 1: Average UK market prices for 56-tablet packs of lamotrigine 25mg, compared with the Drug Tariff reimbursement price (Source – WaveData)

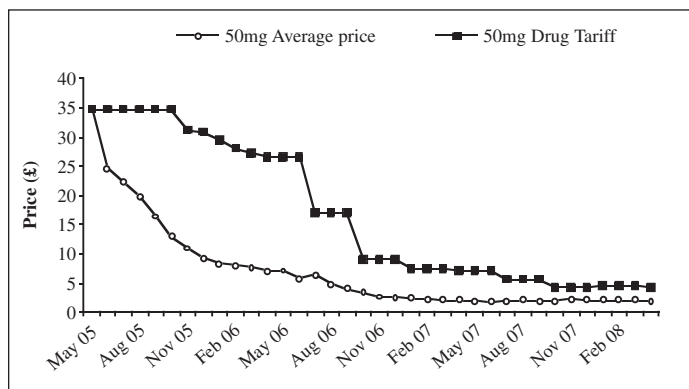


Figure 2: Average UK market prices for 56-tablet packs of lamotrigine 50mg, compared with the Drug Tariff reimbursement price (Source – WaveData)

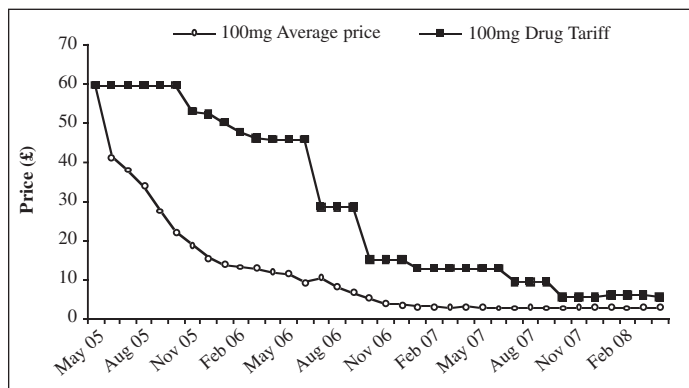


Figure 3: Average UK market prices for 56-tablet packs of lamotrigine 100mg, compared with the Drug Tariff reimbursement price (Source – WaveData)

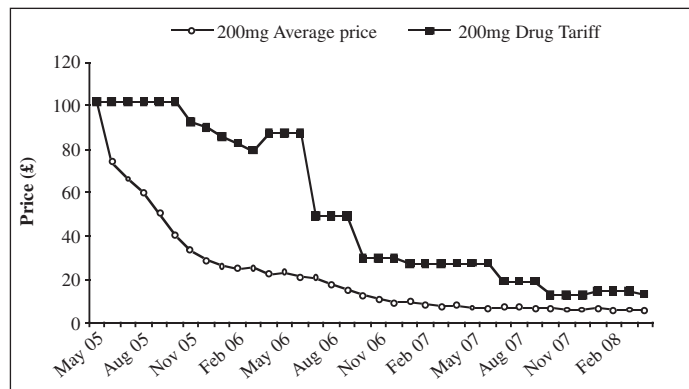


Figure 4: Average UK market prices for 56-tablet packs of lamotrigine 200mg, compared with the Drug Tariff reimbursement price (Source – WaveData)

PRICE WATCH UK

highlights generics price changes in the UK market and appears exclusively in every issue of **Generics bulletin**, courtesy of the Pharma TouchStone service of WaveData.

WaveData collects and collates pricing information from a number of European countries. In the UK, pricing information about generics, brands and parallel imports is gathered from offers made to independent retail pharmacists and dispensing doctors by wholesalers, suppliers and product manufacturers. WaveData collates this data and publishes the results giving customers fast, accurate, real-time access to current generic prices. WaveData's Profesy price-forecasting tool can be found at www.wavedata.biz.

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