

# Betahistine highlights market volatility

Price volatility for betahistine products exposed inertia in the reimbursement system of England and Wales during May. Average prices declined strongly after steep rises, but were still higher in some cases than the special concessionary rates chosen to combat discrepancies between market prices and the Drug Tariff of reimbursement prices.

Prices for betahistine 8mg tablets dropped on average by just over a third during May (see Figure 2). Pharmacists were paying £5.81 (US\$9.06) on average for 84 tablets and £6.75 for packs of 120, after 34% price declines. These prices compared with concessionary reimbursement rates of £5.50 and £7.45, meaning some pharmacists still found themselves out-of-pocket when they dispensed the products. Drug Tariff prices in category M had been set at £5.07 for 84 tablets and £2.95 for 120, based on actual market prices in previous months.

Another betahistine strength, 16mg tablets, was granted the more serious 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) status in May for the second month running (**Generics bulletin**, 4 May 2012, page 21), meaning pharmacists could dispense and be reimbursed for a more expensive alternative.

Elsewhere, special offers were removed for fosinopril 20mg, lansoprazole 30mg and topiramate 50mg with little effect on average prices (see Figure 1). Conversely, prices of pioglitazone continued to slide. Pioglitazone was one of several new generics switched to category M of the Drug Tariff on 1 April (**Generics bulletin**, 23 March 2012, page 21). A 13% average price fall for pioglitazone 15mg tablets was less than 16% falls for the 30mg and 45mg strengths. Far greater, however, were the highest average price rises in May (see Figure 3). **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Betahistine tabs 8mg 84	£4.45	±0	£5.81	-34
Betahistine tabs 8mg 120	£4.95	-17	£6.75	-34
Paracetamol tabs 500mg 32	£0.16	+7	£0.18	-24
Isosorbide tabs 60mg 28	£0.66	-3	£1.22	-22
Methadone sol. 1mg/ml 500ml	£2.50	-4	£3.08	-21
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.33	±0	£0.53	-17

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.24	+200	£0.48	+234
Bisoprolol tabs 10mg 28	£0.31	-9	£0.90	+39
Bisoprolol tabs 5mg 28	£0.24	+4	£0.60	+29
Flutamide tabs 250mg 84	£21.25	+3	£36.59	+22
Temazepam tabs 10mg 28	£1.62	+47	£2.19	+21
Codeine phosphate tabs 30mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.51	+19

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-30 April 2012 and 1-28 May 2012 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 16 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-30 April

2012 and 1-28 May 2012 in lowest and average UK trade prices of about 120 commonly-dispensed generics. The basket specifically excludes the 'fast movers' shown below, but includes other presentations of the same products. Each average price was calculated from at least 13 data points (Source – WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.17	±0	£0.26	+1
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.19	-5	£0.29	+0
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.45	-4	£0.72	-5
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.34	+6	£0.45	+5
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.20	±0	£0.55	+9
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£0.79	+1	£1.26	+1
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 30	£1.09	±0	£1.37	+2
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.28	±0	£0.38	-2
Esomeprazole tabs 40mg 28	£8.24	-14	£11.49	-8
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£0.76	+1	£1.00	-4
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.18	-5	£0.29	-3
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.99	+25	£2.53	+8
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.46	+2	£0.71	-4
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£1.59	-8	£2.36	-3
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.98	+24	£1.18	-1
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.30	±0	£0.40	±0
Losartan tabs 50mg 28	£0.76	+1	£1.16	+1
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.42	±0	£0.57	-6
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.72	-3	£1.01	-3
Olanzapine tabs 5mg 28	£0.75	±0	£1.31	-5
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.52	+2	£0.62	+1
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.29	-4	£4.17	+1
Pantoprazole tabs 20mg 28	£0.42	-2	£0.53	+3
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.79	±0	£1.07	-3
Pioglitazone tabs 15mg 28	£4.70	-23	£7.14	-13

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pramipexole tabs 180µg 30	£0.46	±0	£1.65	-8
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.99	±0	£1.30	±0
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.43	-4	£0.55	+1
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£0.45	±0	£0.63	-1
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.70	-3	£1.13	-1
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.51	±0	£0.80	-7
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.12	+9	£0.23	±0
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.63	-2	£0.94	-1
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.72	±0	£0.90	-3
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£0.85	-4	£1.16	-3
Topiramate tabs 50mg 60	£1.34	+16	£2.13	+5
Topiramate tabs 100mg 60	£1.90	-2	£3.11	+3
Valsartan caps 80mg 28	£1.62	-7	£2.20	-11
Venlafaxine tabs 37.5mg 56	£1.39	±0	£2.01	-3
Venlafaxine XL caps 75mg 28	£0.60	±0	£1.21	-4

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