

Drug Tariff changes affect current prices

Arguments that the Drug Tariff – which specifies reimbursement prices paid to doctors and pharmacists for dispensing generics – should have little or no effect on current prices in the marketplace need only look at our latest Price Watch tables to see this may not be the case.

On 1 April, the latest quarterly Drug Tariff came into effect. As usual, its category M prices were based on quarterly price and volume returns from generics suppliers, uplifted to provide pharmacists with a dispensing margin. What was less usual were the changes to paroxetine prices, in that the price for 30-tablet packs of the 20mg strength went down, while that for 30mg tablets went up. Meanwhile, prices for another category M ingredient, lamotrigine, all went down.

Figure 3 shows the Drug Tariff change to paroxetine 30mg has been subsequently reflected in the marketplace. Figures 1 and 2 show the same thing for average lamotrigine prices. The indicators for paroxetine 20mg are more mixed, but at least one supplier lowered its price.

What is more difficult to judge is what came first. Drug Tariff prices are at least three months out of date and cannot reflect more recent price changes in the market. But the highlighted prices in our latest Price Watch tables might not have been a reaction in the marketplace to the latest Drug Tariff reimbursement prices; they may simply be reflecting a long-term price trend that has been picked up by the Drug Tariff. Either way, for these products, pharmacists are faring no better or worse. **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Lamotrigine disp tabs 100mg 56	£3.71	-5	£5.47	-35
Ranitidine tabs 300mg 30	£0.39	±0	£0.67	-16
Bumetanide tabs 1mg 28	£0.65	±0	£0.88	-13
Lamotrigine tabs 25mg 56	£0.94	+18	£1.49	-10
Amoxicillin susp 125mg/5ml 100ml	£0.35	±0	£0.48	-9
Lamotrigine disp tabs 25mg 56	£2.00	+26	£3.00	-9

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 March and 1-22 April 2008 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 38 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 30mg 30	£2.60	+38	£5.49	+27
Loratadine tabs 10mg 30	£0.42	-7	£0.68	+18
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 28	£1.46	-1	£2.48	+15
Captopril tabs 25mg 56	£0.34	±0	£0.64	+15
Captopril tabs 50mg 56	£0.44	±0	£0.87	+14
Dosulepin caps 25mg 28	£0.34	-6	£0.53	+14

March and 1-22 April 2008 in lowest and average UK market 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					FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)	Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.60	-5	£1.35	+19	Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.46	-6	£0.74	±0
Amlodipine maleate tabs 5mg 28	£0.32	±0	£0.41	-3	Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.39	±0	£0.57	+5
Amlodipine maleate tabs 10mg 28	£0.49	-2	£0.59	+2	Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.95	-19	£1.81	-1
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.39	-3	£0.56	-3	Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.69	-13	£1.20	+1
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.46	-6	£0.71	-2	Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.68	-11	£1.04	-7
Carvedilol tabs 25mg 28	£0.85	-14	£1.30	-3	Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.25	+2	£26.13	±0
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.26	±0	£0.40	-1	Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£1.15	-1	£2.06	+8
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.25	+4	£0.38	+3	Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£1.09	+10	£1.89	-4
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.45	-1	Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.44	-17	£2.77	-6
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.45	±0	£0.63	-2	Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.33	-3	£0.47	-5
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.25	±0	£1.99	+1	Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.42	±0	£0.56	-2
Enalapril maleate tabs 20mg 28	£0.46	+2	£0.64	-2	Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.55	-2	£0.74	-1
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.60	±0	£2.55	+4	Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.32	-18	£0.70	+5
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£1.15	+7	£2.79	-7	Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.58	-11	£1.14	+7
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.35	+13	£2.17	-4	Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.09	±0	£0.17	+8
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.11	+21	£3.10	-1	Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.16	±0	£0.27	+4
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.67	±0	£1.01	+12	Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.38	-19	£0.68	+1
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.49	+5	£1.90	+4	Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.70	-20	£1.04	-5
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.22	-4	£0.34	-7	Tamsulosin MR caps 400µg 30	£1.05	-9	£2.07	+9
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.28	-3	£0.47	-3	Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.38	-7	£1.85	+4

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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