

Glimepiride gains ground after price falls

Glimepiride tablets had some of the fastest-rising prices in May. This made up for lost ground in April, when their prices fell by similar, double-digit amounts.

Packs of 30 glimepiride 4mg tablets cost independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors 17% more on average in May than they had done in April (see Figure 1). At £1.25 (US\$1.83), however, they were still much cheaper than the £1.60 they had cost on average in February (**Generics bulletin**, 5 March 2010, page 21).

Other strengths of the diabetes treatment also underwent a price recovery in May. Glimepiride 1mg and 3mg in 30-tablet packs were 35% and 53% more expensive on average than in the previous month at £0.82 and £1.71 (see Figure 3).

Yet in April, the average price for the 4mg strength was £1.07

after a 19% price fall compared with March. This represented the product's lowest average price this year, a third lower than at its peak in February. Interestingly, the lowest price of 30-tablet packs of glimepiride 4mg has remained constant this year at £0.60 or £0.61.

At current prices, 30-tablet packs of glimepiride 4mg offer an average price discount of 91% on Sanofi-Aventis' Amaryl brand. Their lowest trade price, however, is 96% less. Pharmacists, meanwhile, enjoyed a 44% average dispensing margin in May, based on the Drug Tariff reimbursement price of £2.27, and they could have made a 73% margin if they had shopped around.

Elsewhere, there were as many double-digit rises in average prices as there were double-digit falls. Packs of 28 furosemide 40mg tablets were among the biggest fallers (see Figure 2). G

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Zoplicone tabs 7.5mg 28	£0.46	±0	£0.61	-20
Furosemide tabs 40mg 28	£0.09	±0	£0.13	-18
Doxazosin tabs 4mg 28	£0.52	±0	£0.92	-15
Beclometasone inh. 250µg 200	£6.90	+1	£10.30	-15
Glibenclamide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.14	±0	£0.21	-12
Cimetidine tabs 200mg 60	£5.60	+2	£6.90	-10

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-30 April 2010 and 1-31 May 2010 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 21 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-30 April

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Glimepiride tabs 3mg 30	£0.35	+6	£1.71	+53
Loperamide caps 2mg 30	£0.26	±0	£0.60	+41
Oxytetracycline tabs 250mg 28	£0.32	±0	£0.60	+38
Celiprolol tabs 400mg 28	£9.55	+1	£19.16	+36
Glimepiride tabs 1mg 30	£0.27	+23	£0.82	+35
Imipramine tabs 25mg 28	£0.32	+10	£0.71	+30

2010 and 1-31 May 2010 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 18 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.20	±0	£0.28	+8
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.26	+13	£0.41	-11
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.52	-7
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.34	-11	£0.54	+4
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.46	±0	£0.67	+6
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.27	-4	£0.55	+17
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	±0	£0.39	+2
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.33	-3	£0.47	+5
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.43	-4	£0.69	+5
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.15	-7	£1.56	-8
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	+10	£0.54	-16
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.50	-3	£2.18	+6
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.61	±0	£1.25	+17
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.60	-6	£2.53	+3
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.82	±0	£4.27	+5
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.56	-2	£0.72	-18
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.21	-2	£1.44	-9
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.15	±0	£0.26	+8
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	+11	£0.31	+8
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	±0	£0.50	+10
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.39	+5	£0.56	+19
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.06	-3	£1.56	±0
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.96	-3	£1.41	-6
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£1.10	-26	£1.65	-18
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.54	±0	£8.66	-13

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.79	+7	£1.48	+9
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£1.12	-9	£1.58	-2
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.72	+8	£2.21	-1
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.27	-4	£0.39	+2
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.33	-3	£0.50	+2
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.50	+2	£0.63	-13
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.90	+7	£1.71	+4
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.66	+12
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.50	+4	£0.84	+7
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.17	-6	£0.27	+18
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.24	-4	£0.31	+3
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.44	-2	£0.58	+5
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.67	-7	£1.04	±0
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.89	±0	£1.49	+10
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£0.85	-31	£1.60	+8

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