

Pharmacy profits rise as glimepiride falls

Glimepiride tablets experienced some of the highest average price falls in March compared with a month earlier. As Figure 1 shows, the average trade price of 30-tablet packs of glimepiride 4mg dropped in the UK by 18% to £1.32 (US\$2.00) during the month. Meanwhile, average prices of 30-tablet packs of glimepiride 2mg and 3mg also fell sharply, both by 19% to £0.83 and £1.59, respectively (see Figure 2).

Glimepiride is unusual in the Drug Tariff of reimbursement prices paid to pharmacists and doctors because three of its four strengths are in category M, based on quarterly price data supplied by generics firms; while glimepiride 3mg tablets are in category A, which is a weighted average of the list prices of Actavis and Teva among others.

The average purchase profit for pharmacists dispensing 30-tablet packs of 3mg tablets was 60% in March – based on a reimbursement

price of £4.02 – compared with 55% for glimepiride 2mg and 51% for glimepiride 4mg after the latest price cuts.

Independent pharmacists shopping around for the best trade price for 30-tablet packs of glimepiride 2mg would have enjoyed a profit margin of 86% on a Drug Tariff reimbursement price of £1.84, and 78% on the equivalent 4mg strength, which had a reimbursement price of £2.68. Their purchase profit for the equivalent 3mg pack, however, would have been 92%.

Compared with the trade prices of Amaryl from brand-originator Sanofi-Aventis, the lowest equivalent prices for glimepiride offered a discount of about 96%-97% during March.

The largest March price rise was 36% for 84-tablet packs of diclofenac 50mg tablets (see Figure 3).

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BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Loperamide caps 2mg 30	£0.22	-12	£0.39	-36
Cimetidine tabs 200mg 60	£6.90	-1	£7.79	-30
Co-proxamol tabs 32.5/325mg 100	£6.99	±0	£10.99	-27
Allopurinol tabs 100mg 28	£0.33	±0	£0.63	-24
Glimepiride tabs 2mg 30	£0.25	-11	£0.83	-19
Glimepiride tabs 3mg 30	£0.33	±0	£1.59	-19

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-28 February 2010 and 1-31 March 2010 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 26 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-28

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Diclofenac tabs 50mg 84	£0.45	±0	£1.00	+36
Beclometasone Inh. 100µg (200)	£4.04	+80	£6.65	+19
Co-tenidone tabs 50/12.5mg 28	£0.34	+6	£0.61	+17
Metronidazole tabs 200mg 21	£0.20	±0	£0.45	+16
Metronidazole tabs 400mg 21	£0.31	±0	£0.58	+16
Aspirin disp. tabs 75mg 28	£0.10	±0	£0.15	+14

February 2010 and 1-31 March 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 13 data points (Source – WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.20	-9	£0.29	+3
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.26	-4	£0.58	-5
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.39	+11	£0.68	+1
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.38	±0	£0.53	-9
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.46	±0	£0.67	-1
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.27	-4	£0.56	-1
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	±0	£0.41	-2
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	-5	£0.49	-2
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.44	+10	£0.73	-3
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.17	+1	£1.71	+1
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.33	-8	£0.56	-4
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.53	-1	£2.05	-16
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.60	-2	£1.32	-18
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.65	±0	£2.50	-8
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.81	±0	£3.99	-8
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.59	-5	£0.74	-2
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.24	-2	£1.58	-3
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.15	±0	£0.27	+11
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.19	±0	£0.32	-4
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	+3	£0.51	+2
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.39	-3	£0.53	-8
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.09	-9	£1.69	-9
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£1.14	+87	£1.66	+1
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£1.75	-1	£2.54	-9
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.46	±0	£17.35	±0

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.59	+9	£1.41	-5
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£1.30	+31	£1.69	+3
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.62	+1	£2.33	-6
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.27	+4	£0.48	+19
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.33	±0	£0.51	-3
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.49	+2	£0.70	+9
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.84	+24	£1.76	-3
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.34	+6	£0.70	-21
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.50	+11	£0.90	±0
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.16	-6	£0.24	-8
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.21	+5	£0.31	-3
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.47	+4	£0.62	-13
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.72	±0	£1.19	-8
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.89	±0	£1.51	-11
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.24	±0	£1.48	-15

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