

Products shortages lead authorities to act

Pharmacists are discussing with the UK Department of Health what can be done about the number of generic medicines in short supply. Their representatives on the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) pointed out that nine products had been granted 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) status by the department for February, meaning pharmacists would be reimbursed for dispensing an equivalent product that was more expensive than the generic's Drug Tariff reimbursement price. A further nine generics, added the PSNC, had been granted concessionary increases to their reimbursement prices.

Among the former were sertraline 100mg tablets (see Figure 1), whose average price for 28-tablet packs increased by 229% last month to £13.65 (US\$21.96). This followed a similar 224% rise to £4.15 in January (**Generics bulletin**, 11 February 2011, page 23). Among the

latter nine products granted concessionary price rises in February were 28-tablet packs of prednisolone 5mg tablets, whose average trade price to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors rose by 199% to £1.57 (see Figure 3). This contrasted strongly with the concessionary price from the department of £9.73.

Elsewhere, however, the general trend was for prices to fall. Many of the 'fast movers' listed in Figure 1 experienced double-digit average price declines over the month, especially recent generic entrants such as pramipexole, risedronate, topiramate and venlafaxine XL capsules.

Average prices for 28-capsule packs of ramipril 1.25mg, 2.5mg and 5mg all underwent dramatic price falls of 20% or more in February (see Figure 2). Their lowest prices hardly moved, suggesting suppliers were making offers, but none represented the lowest in the market. **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Captopril tabs 12.5mg 56	£0.25	±0	£0.35	-24
Glimepiride tabs 3mg 30	£0.15	±0	£0.95	-23
Ramipril tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.40	+3	£0.77	-23
Ciprofloxacin tabs 750mg 10	£0.58	+5	£1.47	-21
Ramipril tabs 1.25mg 28	£0.47	±0	£0.92	-20
Ramipril tabs 5mg 28	£0.54	±0	£0.92	-20

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 January 2011 and 1-25 February 2011 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 37 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 (%)
Prednisolone tabs 5mg 28	£0.33	+14	£1.57	+199
Furosemide tabs 40mg 28	£0.09	+13	£0.22	+65
Cetirizine tabs 10mg 30	£0.18	±0	£0.44	+59
Furosemide tabs 20mg 28	£0.09	±0	£0.26	+39
Isosorbide tabs 20mg 56	£0.36	+20	£0.71	+34
Naproxen tabs 500mg 28	£0.79	+7	£1.29	+29

January 2011 and 1-25 February 2011 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 12 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.35	±0	£0.54	-12
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	±0	£0.41	+8
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.48	±0	£0.63	±0
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.24	-4	£0.34	-21
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£3.49	-12	£5.92	-3
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£0.79	-17	£1.38	-3
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 30	£1.25	±0	£1.62	-6
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.26	±0	£0.34	-7
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£0.87	±0	£1.20	-3
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.24	±0	£0.49	-13
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.41	-4	£1.93	±0
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.60	-2	£0.88	-7
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.37	±0	£3.47	-3
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.94	+13	£1.15	+2
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.37	+9	£0.52	+2
Losartan tabs 50mg 28	£0.49	±0	£0.69	-8
Losartan tabs 100mg 28	£0.54	-2	£0.81	-11
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.44	±0	£0.74	-8
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.79	±0	£1.35	±0
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.67	±0	£0.91	-5
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£3.00	±0	£4.44	-8
Pantoprazole tabs 20mg 28	£0.41	-5	£0.73	±0
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.94	+36	£1.25	-7
Pramipexole tabs 180µg 30	£2.12	±0	£5.62	-34
Pramipexole tabs 700µg 30	£8.85	-38	£20.44	-41

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.30	+34	£1.77	±0
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.54	-5	£0.72	±0
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£1.19	-28	£2.41	-52
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.77	±0	£1.43	+1
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.75	±0	£13.65	+229
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.23	+10	£0.29	+2
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.39	±0	£0.47	-1
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.69	±0	£0.94	-7
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.77	±0	£1.10	-9
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£0.85	-22	£1.42	+2
Topiramate tabs 50mg 60	£1.89	±0	£3.24	-8
Topiramate tabs 100mg 60	£2.90	-3	£4.40	-11
Venlafaxine tabs 37.5mg 56	£1.82	±0	£2.66	-2
Venlafaxine XL caps 75mg 28	£0.55	-24	£1.13	-13
Venlafaxine XL caps 150mg 28	£1.44	-23	£2.27	-11

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