

# Simvastatin's price sinks to a new low

In a relatively quiet month for price changes, the latest offer in the UK for 28-tablet packs of simvastatin 20mg stands out. A 42% price decrease sounds enormous, but was actually only a few pence. But it is difficult to think of what else can be bought for as little as £0.11 (US\$0.13), which was the product's lowest trade price in April. Not even the lower 10mg strength of simvastatin was cheaper, as its lowest price remained steady at exactly a halfpenny a tablet.

There was also a good price on offer to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors for 30-tablet packs of pramipexole 180µg – down by 27% to £0.46 (see Figure 1) – but this deal was not reflected in the product's average price, which rose by 10% to £1.80. Conversely, there were no special deals for pramipexole 88µg, but the average price fell by 14% to £1.14 (see Figure 2).

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Calcium/ergocalciferol tabs 28	£0.39	+11	£3.72	-16
Ropinirole tabs 5mg 84	£9.95	-17	£22.48	-16
Methadone oral sol. 1mg/ml 500ml	£2.60	±0	£3.20	-15
Pramipexole tabs 88µg 30	£0.41	±0	£1.14	-14
Pioglitazone tabs 30mg 28	£7.47	-16	£10.90	-13
Co-proxamol tabs 32.5/325mg 100	£4.00	+3	£7.69	-11

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 March 2012 and 1-25 April 2012 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 13 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31

Prices for pioglitazone products were also on the way down, as the average price for 28-tablet packs of pioglitazone 15mg dropped by 15%, closely followed by the 30mg strength with a 13% price fall.

Some strong price rises outside of the 'fast movers' were led by 28-tablet packs of glibenclamide 2.5mg with an average price increase of 44% to £0.54 (see Figure 3). There is obviously also a shortage of meloxicam and isosorbide products. In addition to the two isosorbide products with 24% and 30% average price rises, 28-tablet packs of isosorbide XL 60mg were just outside the 'biggest risers' table with a 20% average price increase.

During the month, 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) status was granted to betahistine 16mg and repaglinide 2mg tablets. Pharmacists could dispense and be reimbursed for a more expensive alternative. **G**

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Glibenclamide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.13	+8	£0.54	+44
Meloxicam tabs 15mg 30	£0.39	+18	£0.80	+33
Sotalol tabs 40mg 28	£0.48	-6	£0.90	+32
Meloxicam tabs 7.5mg 30	£0.31	+3	£0.67	+30
Isosorbide tabs 10mg 56	£0.34	+6	£0.86	+30
Isosorbide tabs 20mg 56	£0.38	±0	£0.92	+24

March 2012 and 1-25 April 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 14 data points (Source – WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.17	-6	£0.26	-7
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	+5	£0.29	+4
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.47	+7	£0.76	+3
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.32	±0	£0.43	-5
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.20	-5	£0.51	-15
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£0.78	-1	£1.28	+3
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 30	£1.09	±0	£1.35	+2
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.28	±0	£0.39	-2
Esomeprazole tabs 40mg 28	£9.62	±0	£12.53	-7
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£0.75	-3	£1.04	+5
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.19	±0	£0.30	+6
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.59	±0	£2.34	+3
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.45	-4	£0.74	+5
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£1.73	+15	£2.43	+8
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.79	±0	£1.19	±0
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.30	+3	£0.40	±0
Losartan tabs 50mg 28	£0.75	+7	£1.14	+2
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.42	-2	£0.60	+7
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.74	-1	£1.04	+2
Olanzapine tabs 5mg 28	£0.75	-15	£1.39	-9
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.51	±0	£0.62	±0
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.39	+10	£4.12	+4
Pantoprazole tabs 20mg 28	£0.43	+2	£0.51	±0
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.79	-4	£1.11	-2
Pioglitazone tabs 15mg 28	£6.10	-6	£8.16	-15

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pramipexole tabs 180µg 30	£0.46	-27	£1.80	+10
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.99	±0	£1.30	±0
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.45	-2	£0.54	-1
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£0.45	-6	£0.64	-6
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.72	±0	£1.14	±0
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.51	-4	£0.86	+2
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.11	-42	£0.23	-3
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.64	+2	£0.95	+10
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.72	+16	£0.93	+4
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£0.89	+7	£1.20	+6
Topiramate tabs 50mg 60	£1.16	-6	£2.03	-5
Topiramate tabs 100mg 60	£1.93	±0	£3.02	-2
Valsartan caps 80mg 28	£1.75	+1	£2.47	-12
Venlafaxine tabs 37.5mg 56	£1.39	±0	£2.07	+2
Venlafaxine XL caps 75mg 28	£0.60	+2	£1.26	+15

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