

UK experiences some rapid price rises

Many double-digit price changes occurred in September as the UK industry geared up after its summer break. Some notable price rises were recorded for citalopram and sertraline, for example, while offers were also withdrawn for ramipril. In the latter case, however, average prices declined as the lowest prices increased (see Figure 1), suggesting a single supplier had shifted some short-dated stock.

But for citalopram and sertraline, average price rises were almost matched by increases in their lowest prices, indicating that the markets for both products were moving upwards. Their October Drug Tariff reimbursement prices, however, showed marked decreases.

While 28-tablet packs of citalopram 20mg increased in price by 46% on average to £1.16 (US\$1.85) in September, the Drug Tariff price paid to pharmacists for dispensing the product stood still at £1.46. This

meant a fall in dispensing profit margin from 46% to 21% between August and September. However, rather than correcting the discrepancy in October, the product's reimbursement price was cut to £1.30 and pharmacists' margin to 11%, based on average September prices.

Similarly, pharmacists were still making a 36% margin on 28-tablet packs of sertraline 50mg in September, despite the 19% average price rise, but this was reduced to 15% in October when the Drug Tariff price was dropped from £1.52 to £1.15. However, the average generic price of citalopram 20mg was still showing an 87% discount to Lundbeck's Cipramil in September; while sertraline 50mg was 95% cheaper on average than Pfizer's Lustral, despite the price rise.

Elsewhere, average price falls were relatively modest in September (see Figure 2), but rises were much stronger (see Figure 3).

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Metformin tabs 500mg 28	£0.24	±0	£0.34	-17
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.35	+3	£0.49	-15
Dosulepin caps 25mg 28	£0.25	+4	£0.35	-11
Co-tenidone tabs 100mg/25mg 28	£0.94	-30	£1.40	-11
Dosulepin tabs 75mg 28	£0.43	-4	£0.62	-11
Co-tenidone tabs 50mg/12.5mg 28	£0.86	-33	£1.31	-10

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 August 2010 and 1-30 September 2010 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 15 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31 August

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Tamoxifen tabs 20mg 30	£1.10	+9	£2.52	+71
Gabapentin caps 100mg 100	£1.80	±0	£4.98	+56
Furosemide tabs 20mg 28	£0.09	±0	£0.25	+43
Tolbutamide tabs 500mg 28	£0.92	+8	£1.68	+30
Amiloride tabs 5mg 28	£0.17	±0	£0.40	+27
Lisinopril tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.10	-23	£0.23	+26

2010 and 1-30 September 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 15 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.23	+21	£0.42	+60
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.20	±0	£0.34	-3
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	-25	£0.42	-16
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.38	±0	£0.50	-13
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.46	±0	£0.67	-1
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.28	+4	£0.59	+23
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.31	+3	£0.60	+11
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.57	+19	£1.16	+46
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.60	+11	£0.94	+12
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.10	-4	£1.50	-6
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.15	-55	£0.37	-21
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.19	-18	£1.91	-12
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.58	-5	£1.23	+2
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.43	±0	£2.38	-7
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.19	-12	£3.74	-8
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.44	-10	£0.62	-4
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.03	-6	£1.41	+5
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.18	±0	£0.28	+10
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.19	±0	£0.33	+12
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	+6	£0.52	+5
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.50	+35	£0.95	±0
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.86	-13	£1.36	-5
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.72	-9	£1.01	-6
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.74	-1	£0.95	-3
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.50	±0	£5.40	-39

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.77	-3	£1.37	+2
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£1.10	-7	£1.50	+1
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.44	-9	£1.99	-3
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.39	+18	£0.54	-6
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.43	+26	£0.61	-6
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.54	+10	£0.73	-6
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.69	-14	£1.67	+2
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.44	+13	£0.98	+19
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.59	+9	£1.19	+17
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.15	-6	£0.22	+3
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.24	+9	£0.30	-1
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.42	-2	£0.51	+1
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.72	-1	£1.16	+7
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.79	-10	£1.24	-2
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.09	-9	£1.47	-12

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