

UK pharmacists enjoy summer savings

Summer savings were on offer to UK independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors in June, as prices tumbled across the board. Four-tablet packs of alendronate 70mg were available a third cheaper on average than they had been just a month earlier in May, while the same was true of 28-tablet packs of carvedilol in both 3.125mg and 6.25mg strengths (see Figures 1 and 2).

As we have remarked before (**Generics bulletin**, 3 April 2009, page 19), carvedilol is unusual in that its four strengths straddle two separate reimbursement categories of the Drug Tariff. Whereas category A reimbursement prices of the two lowest carvedilol strengths are determined by the price lists of Actavis, Teva and two wholesalers, those in category M of the two highest strengths are arrived at from actual market prices.

This means that the average pharmacy profit margin for carvedilol 6.25mg after its 33% price cut to £0.50 (US\$0.82) was a buoyant 92% – based on a reimbursement price of £6.09 – but that for carvedilol 12.5mg after its more modest 13% price cut to £0.65 was the altogether less exciting 58%. Similarly, pharmacists who shopped around made a whopping 95% profit margin on the lowest price of carvedilol 6.25mg, but a less attractive 77% on the 12.5mg equivalent.

Average pharmacy margins on four-tablet packs of alendronate 70mg were lifted to 75% in category M by the 35% price cut; while an even better margin of 84% was available on the lowest price after a more modest 4% price decline.

Meanwhile, 30-tablet packs of fluoxetine 20mg were one of the few products to experience a double-digit price rise (see Figure 3). **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Carvedilol tabs 3.125mg 28	£0.24	+4	£0.43	-33
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£1.30	+1	£1.64	-25
Dosulepin tabs 75mg 28	£0.44	-8	£0.74	-15
Ibuprofen tabs 400mg 250	£1.99	-1	£2.61	-14
Diazepam tabs 2mg 28	£0.15	-6	£0.27	-14
Enalapril tabs 5mg 28	£0.19	-5	£0.31	-13

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 May and 1-24 June 2009 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 34 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31 May and 1-24

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.19	±0	£0.41	+17
Gliclazide tabs 80mg 28	£0.21	±0	£0.40	+14
Ranitidine tabs 150mg 60	£0.26	-4	£0.52	+13
Furosemide tabs 40mg 28	£0.10	±0	£0.15	+12
Ferrous sulphate tabs 200mg 28	£0.28	+12	£0.51	+11
Mesalazine tabs 400mg 120	£16.29	+16	£21.86	+10

June 2009 in lowest and average UK market 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	£0.25	-4	£0.39	-35
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.21	-5	£0.29	-3
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.31	-6	£0.40	-11
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.30	+7	£0.50	-33
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.36	±0	£0.65	-13
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.28	+4	£0.56	-11
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.26	+8	£0.51	-5
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.42	±0	£0.63	-3
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.50	±0	£0.90	-6
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.29	-3	£2.16	-11
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	-6	£0.50	-5
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.38	-1	£2.15	±0
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.58	-2	£2.40	-9
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.82	+14	£2.90	-4
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£3.03	+3	£4.17	-6
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.70	-3	£0.94	-4
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.42	-5	£1.76	-2
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.17	±0	£0.26	-8
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	-9	£0.32	-4
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.36	+6	£0.51	-7
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.37	±0	£0.53	-8
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.29	±0	£2.01	-2
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.63	-2	£0.87	-14
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.65	+7	£0.76	-8
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£1.68	+3	£30.92	-8

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.60	-12	£1.45	-17
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.88	+5	£1.36	-1
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.39	+11	£1.93	+1
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.26	±0	£0.40	-6
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.33	-3	£0.51	-7
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.49	±0	£0.66	-6
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.91	-8	£3.29	-1
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.32	+10	£0.67	-12
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.46	+2	£0.90	-16
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.16	+7	£0.24	-5
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.22	+5	£0.31	-2
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.44	-2	£0.53	-5
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.65	-6	£1.06	-10
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£1.09	-8	£1.78	-14
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.20	+1	£1.63	-2

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