

Buyers engage in a lively battle of wits

December 2016 purchase price analysis by Wavedata



Over the past year, pharmacists and dispensing doctors have been engaged in an active duel to get the best purchase prices; while dispensing doctors have gained much the greater ground in generics, pharmacists give as good as they get in the parallel import sword play. In the longer term both buyer types are likely to become so evenly matched that suppliers may eventually treat them exactly the same.

During December there were notable price movements in the generic market. Among the key risers for December were eight packs of pregabalin caps. Since generic pregabalin was launched in March 2015 the market has expected reimbursement rates to drop below their £64.40-£99.48 range. However, to date there is no sign of this, despite many purchasing prices of less than £2.00: the market may be beginning to think that high reimbursement prices for this line are status quo, and that prices can increase without harming sales. It may also be that pregabalin's high profitability has made the retail market less aware of stock availability issues.

Fallers

The average price of ropinirole tabs 0.25mg x12 fell by 24 per cent at the beginning of December as most suppliers reduced prices to dispensing doctors and retail pharmacies. English and Welsh Drug Tariffs remained at £1.21, but the Scottish Tariff fell from £6.05 to £4.50. Additionally, the English Drug Tariff rose to £9.12 at the beginning of January. The best offers below £4.00 were on offer from Phoenix, Numark, AAH, Trident, Ethgen, Lexon and OTC Direct.

Aspirin disp tabs 300mg x100 fell by an average of 19 per cent in December as a number of high prices disappeared from the market. The English Drug Tariff remained at £3.44 until the end of December, then rose to £3.50 in January. The best December deals below £1.00 were on offer from Ethgen, OTC Direct, AAH, Trident, Lexon, Mawdsleys, Eclipse and DE.

Levetiracetam oral solution S/F 100mg/ml x300ml also had a stable Drug Tariff reimbursement price between October and December, but this dropped from £6.33

to £5.33 in January. The average price change at the beginning of December of 18 per cent was due to Lexon and Numark reducing their prices. The best December offers below £5.00 were from Phoenix, Beta, AAH and Numark.

Risers

Offer prices for zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg x12 were extremely variable in December with extremes of £25.11 and £1.90. However, the trend was for companies to lean towards the higher price end, mainly influenced by an NCSO price for zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg x6 of £13.70. Assuming the very low prices are transient, the best offers below £20.00 were from Trident, AAH, OTC Direct, DE and Eclipse.

Pregabalin caps 25mg x84 was another product with a very wide range of prices, from £96.60 down to £1.99. However, this could indicate which suppliers had stock as the same price range is already in evidence in early January. The best December offers below £5.00 were from AAH, Trident, Teva, Lexon and DE.

Like the 84 pack, the 56 pack of pregabalin caps 25mg also had a wide range of December offer prices; higher ones indicated low stock availability. Like the 84 pack, an increase in the number of high prices for the 56 pack may indicate a longer term availability issue. However, in December there were lots of offers below £2.00; main suppliers included: Phoenix, AAH, Lexon, Teva, DE and Mawdsleys.

