

# February ushers in rising purchase prices

By Wavedata

Price rises have been a key feature of February's buying: nearly all product groups experienced price rises, including two packs each of pilocarpine eye drops, pregabalin and valsartan caps, and risedronate sodium tabs. Candesartan tabs had two packs among the risers but also had one pack in the fallers.



As usual dispensing doctors retain their pole position in achieving better deals on generics. However, when it comes to parallel imports, the picture is more mixed: dispensing practices and community pharmacies take it in turn to get good deals. Overall, the deals and prices are similar for dispensing doctors and pharmacies, but buying and dispensing patterns disrupt what should be two parallel lines.

## Risers

Prices of zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg x12 rose dramatically in February as most suppliers increased prices to chemists and dispensing doctors. The only deals below £25 in February were from Lexon, Ethigen, OTC Direct and Eclipse, but early indications for March indicate that deals below £30 will be hard to find.

Many companies increased their prices for metformin SR tabs 500mg x28 in February, however deals of below £1 were still available from Mawdsleys, Zecare, Ethigen, Forte Direct, Eclipse, Lexon, Beta, Numark and OTC Direct.

Buspirone tabs 10mg x30 have caused confusion because the Scottish drug tariff price is £9.70 compared to £3.85 in the English & Welsh, and Northern Irish tariffs. This is likely to lead to a certain amount of cross-border competition. However, with big price increases from some companies and moderate reductions from others during the month, February hints at availability problems. However, deals below £5 were available from OTC Direct, Alliance, Lexon and Beta.

## Fallers

In February, metformin tabs 500mg x28 saw purchase prices gradually fall as fresh suppliers introduced cheaper offers. Dispensing doctors could get stock at below £0.20 from Forte Direct, OTC Direct, Ethigen, Beta and Zecare, and pharmacists from Eclipse, B&S, Waymade Laxmico, Numark, Phoenix, Cambrian Alliance and Beta.

The dispensing doctor price of rivastigmine caps 6mg x56 fell by 69 per cent on average as Alliance Healthcare and others reduced prices. The best deals below £25 in the market were from Teva, Eclipse and Ethigen.

The average prices of metronidazole tabs 200mg x21 fell in February as Alliance Healthcare, Numark, Ethigen, Beta and Eclipse cut prices. The best deals below £0.50 were from Lexon, Beta, Ethigen, OTC Direct and PharmXC.