

GPs continue to command generics market



During August, dispensing doctors remained in the shadow of pharmacies when it came to negotiating good parallel import prices. Continuing a trend which started in April, pharmacies now see additional discounts on PIs of about £1.30 per pack, over and above those achieved by dispensing surgeries. The reasons for this are unclear, although the fact that GPs do less face-to-face negotiating may play a role.

However, generics continue to prove fertile shopping territory for dispensing GPs: over the past year they have paid £2.16 less per pack on average than have retail pharmacies.

Looking specifically at August, there were a couple of products where multiple packs were subject to price reductions: this includes five packs of olanzapine tablets and four of quetiapine tablets. Other themes this month included three packs each of levetiracetam tablets 750mg among the fallers and propranolol tablets among the risers.

Fallers

A handful of companies have consistently charged very high prices for nortriptyline tablets 25mg x100 since 2016. Before this, high prices were the norm. In the past couple of months, the number of offer prices above the English drug tariff has fallen from 14 in July to just seven in August, which may reflect a greater level of availability. The best deals in August below £2.00 were from OTC Direct, AAH, Beta, DE and Crosspharma.

Although a few companies increased prices for levetiracetam tablets 1g x60 in August, the majority reduced prices – some making big price reductions. The best deals in August below £8.00 were from B&S Colorama, Chemilines, Beta, AAH, Munro and Numark.

Like the 25mg pack of nortriptyline tablets, the 10mg x100 pack also saw a reduction in the number of high-priced market offers in August. In July there were 13 offers above the English drug tariff, but this fell to eight in August. The best deals below £2.00 were from B&S Colorama, AAH, OTC Direct, Beta, DE, Crosspharma, Aver Generics, Numark, Target and Lexon.

Risers

The majority of suppliers increased their prices for propranolol tablets 80mg x56 in August. This was accompanied by an increase in the drug tariff from £1.17 to £1.35, and by an increase in the number of offer prices above the English drug tariff from four in May to 21 in August. The best offers below £1.00 were from Beta, DE, Cavendish, Cambrian, OTC Direct and Alliance.

Tadalafil tablets 2.5mg x28 has seen an increase in the number of offers and the number of high prices over the last few months. However, although the number of market offers has grown from 16 in July to 27 in August, none of these prices has exceeded the English drug tariff. The remaining low-priced offers – below £10.00 – were from OTC Direct, DE, Eclipse and Alliance.

For the first time August saw the introduction of prices above the English drug tariff for losartan tablets 25mg x28. This may indicate a shortage. However, there was no reduction in the number of market offers and although there was an upward drift in suppliers' prices,

no concession was granted and the drug tariff remained the same. The best offers below £0.50 were from B&S Colorama, Target, Chemilines, Amimed, DE, Crosspharma, Eclipse, AAH, Beta and Ethigen.