

One-price PI market emerges as GPs buy in



Analysis of market prices for the past four months suggests that PI suppliers are simplifying price offers and are beginning to treat pharmacists and dispensing GPs as equals: this may be because dispensing GPs are beginning to accept PIs as a routine part of the dispensary portfolio.

As a whole, GPs continue to negotiate better prices for generics despite market price fluctuations. Headline price risers and fallers for October include among the risers four packs of fentanyl transdermal patches, and two each of mirtazapine, spironolactone and telmisartan tabs, and among the fallers three packs of isosorbide mononitrate tabs and two packs of amiodarone tabs.

Fallers

The average price of isosorbide mononitrate tabs 10mg x56 fell dramatically in October as prices above £5.00 disappeared from the dispensing doctor supply market and were replaced by new offers of less than £2.00. This was despite an increase in the drug tariff from £1.50 to £6.97. Excellent prices below £2.00 were available to dispensing doctors from Beta and OTC Direct, and to pharmacists from Beta, Actavis and Medihealth North.

The 40mg x56 pack of isosorbide mononitrate tabs saw a similar increase in drug tariff (£1.72 to £6.01) accompanied by another large fall in the average price. The best market offers below £2.00 in October were available from Mawdsleys, Trident, AAH, Ethigen and Lexon.

Amiodarone tabs 200mg x28 also saw an increase in drug tariff in October (from £1.75 to £2.00) as well as a fall in the average price. A number of companies reduced their prices in October, leaving the best offers below £1.50 on offer from Pharmaceutical Direct, Ethigen, AAH, Beta, Lexon and Numark.

Risers

October saw market prices for naratriptan tabs 2.5mg x12 edging up toward £50 when they were closer to £3.00 six months ago. The few remaining prices below £30.00 were being offered by Numark, Lexon and Phoenix. This price hike was accompanied by an increase in the Scottish drug tariff of naratriptan tabs 2.5mg x6 from £1.90 in April to £24.55 in October. The English and Northern Irish drug tariffs rose a tiny bit to £2.03 in October, but were considerably out of step with the market.

The price changes for aspirin tabs 300mg x32 were a mixed bag in October, with reduced prices from Alliance but on the whole, many low priced offers disappeared. In September there were 12 offers below £1.00, but this fell to six in October. The resulting price increase left just OTC Direct, Lexon, Eclipse, Trident and Ethigen with prices below £0.50 but the majority of the market was above £2.00.

In October the average price market of mirtazapine tabs 15mg x28 rose as a number of suppliers increased their prices. In September there were no prices above £2.00, but in October there were 22 from five different companies. The best offers below £1.00 were available from Sangars (NI), Phoenix, Teva, Numark, Forte Direct, Beta, Waymade, Laxmico, Eclipse, Ethigen and Lexon.