

Widespread shortages make the cost of their presence felt



After a year of widespread shortages and general price rises in the market, dispensing GPs have seen the cost of their generics' shopping basket rise to the level paid by pharmacists. In December (the last month for which there is complete data) on average pharmacists bought generics for £0.41 less than dispensing doctors. With hundreds of products now costing more than the drug tariff to buy, higher generics prices look likely to continue.

Among the headline price risers for January 2018 are four packs of topiramate tabs and two packs of glimepiride tabs. Among the key fallers were four packs of risperidone tabs and two packs of each of nortriptyline and olanzapine tabs and piroxicam gels.

Risers

Manufacturer and wholesaler prices for topiramate tabs 100mg x60 rose dramatically in both December and January, hitting dispensary profitability. The best offers below £15.00 were on offer from Teva, AAH, Mawdsleys and Accord.

The 50mg x60 pack of topiramate tabs suffered similar price rises, accompanied by only a small increase in the English tariff in January (from £1.52 to £1.71). Most suppliers put their prices up either in December or in January, however, offers below £10.00 were available from Accord, AAH, Teva and Strathclyde.

Topiramate tabs 25mg x 60 saw a tariff reduction from £1.44 to £1.34 in January. With an average price of £12.38, this is the third pack of topiramate to cause dispensaries a cash headache in January. The best market offers below £6.00 were on offer from Accord, AAH, Teva, Lexon, Eclipse and Elite.

Fallers

A reduction in the drug tariffs for nortriptyline tabs 25mg x100 from £17.81 to £15.01 at the beginning of January drove price reductions for dispensing doctors and pharmacies. The suppliers reducing their prices included manufacturers, short and full line wholesalers with the best offers below £5.00 from Beta, DE, B & S and Elite.

Similarly, a fall in the English drug tariff for piroxicam gel 0.5% x60g from £2.15 to £2.03 resulted in price reductions from a range of suppliers. The best deals below £0.60 were on offer from B & S, AAH, Strathclyde, Ethigen, Beta, Sangers and Eclipse.

Like the 60g pack of piroxicam Gel 0.5%, the 112g also saw a tariff price reduction (from £4.01 to £3.79). A number of suppliers followed suit, although a few put prices up. However, the net effect was an overall price reduction with the best deals below £1.50 on offer from Chemilines, B & S, AAH, Eclipse, Aver Generics, Ethigen, Beta, Strathclyde, Sangers, Mawdsleys and Forte Direct. A steadier picture was evident in the Scottish drug tariff.