

Pharmacists profit from ondansetron

For the fourth month running, the Drug Tariff price for 30-tablet packs of ondansetron 4mg has fallen to a new low. The February 2008 reimbursement price to pharmacists and dispensing doctors in England and Wales for the antiemetic is £92.78 (US\$182.00), a £1.00 reduction on the December 2007 price and £0.26 on January 2008.

The Drug Tariff price has been falling steadily for more than a year for the category A medicine, whose price takes into account the list prices of Actavis and Teva as well as those of the leading wholesalers, Celesio's AAH and Alliance Boots' Unichem (see Figure 1). During that time, Actavis has consistently offered a price of £86.32 to independent pharmacists; while Teva's price has oscillated around the £35 mark.

Despite the discrepancy between the two manufacturers' prices of more than £50, both have been consistently more expensive than the market average price, which was £27.75 in January (**Generics bulletin**, 1 February 2008, page 15). This average price offered a 74% discount on GlaxoSmithKline's Zofran brand price of £107.91, but was an unusually high ten-times more expensive than the lowest market price recorded by WaveData of £2.59. Pharmacists buying at this price could have made a £90.45 'purchase profit' after reimbursement on each pack.

As Price Watch noted just over a year ago (**Generics bulletin**, 22 September 2006, page 17), ondansetron's price decline since launch in mid-2006 has been relatively gentle, although with such a wide gap between market prices, it rather depends on which price is used for the calculation. A lowest price showing a 98% discount to the brand is as big a fall as any recent generic after patent expiry.

Eight suppliers are listed in Figure 1, but WaveData has recorded other players in the market since patent expiry, such as Hillcross, Sovereign, Tillomed and Winthrop. It is also worth noting that while the Drug Tariff has continued to fall from its almost brand-price level, the average price of ondansetron has been gradually rising each

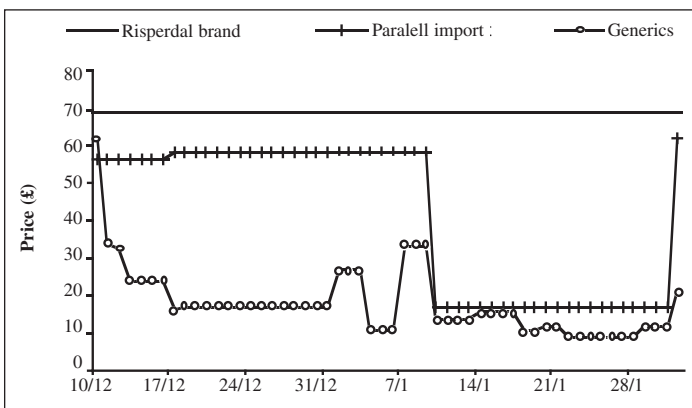


Figure 2: Average market prices for 60-tablet packs of risperidone 2mg since generic launch in December last year (Source – WaveData)

month since it hit a low of £18.64 last October, about 15 months after launch (**Generics bulletin**, 2 November 2007, page 19). The lowest price, however, has not risen. Last October's £2.95 was actually a little higher than that recorded in January this year.

Meanwhile, the average prices of risperidone in the first few months after launch have followed a typical downward trajectory (see Figure 2). A low of £8.90 in January for 60-tablet packs of risperidone 2mg represented an 87% discount on the £68.69 trade price of Janssen-Cilag's Risperdal. Similarly, average prices for 20-tablet packs of risperidone 0.5mg declined to a low-point of just £1.25 in mid-January, which was an 82% discount on the equivalent brand price of £7.06. However, average prices for both of these strengths staged something of a recovery at the beginning of this month, as did those for the two pack sizes of the 1mg strength and the 3mg, 4mg and 6mg strengths of generic risperidone tablets. **G**

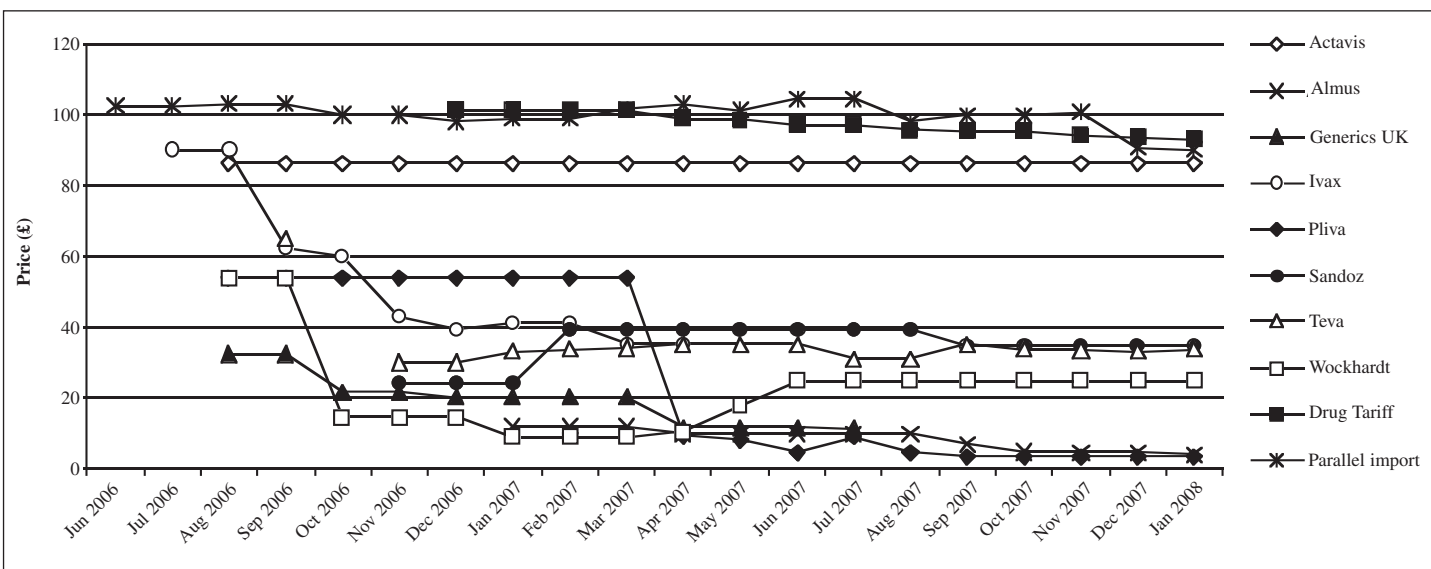


Figure 1: Trade price offers reported to WaveData for 30-tablet packs of ondansetron 4mg since generic launch, compared with the Drug Tariff (Source – WaveData)

PRICE WATCH UK highlights generics price changes in the UK market and appears exclusively in every issue of **Generics bulletin**, courtesy of the Pharma TouchStone service of WaveData.

WaveData collects and collates pricing information from a number of European countries. In the UK, pricing information about generics, brands and parallel imports is gathered from offers made to independent retail pharmacists and dispensing doctors by wholesalers, suppliers and product manufacturers.

WaveData collates this data and publishes the results giving customers fast, accurate, real-time access to current generic prices. WaveData's Profesy price-forecasting tool can be found at www.wavedata.biz.

■ For further information see www.wavedata.net or contact Charles Joynson, WaveData Limited, Concorde House, Comet Way, Eastwood, Essex SS2 6GD, UK Tel: +44 (0)1702 425125; Fax +44(0)1702 425129; E-mail cjoynson@wavedata.co.uk. Website: www.wavedata.co.uk.