

# Carvedilol offers better pharmacy margins

Prices for lower strengths of carvedilol were on the slide last month with average trade prices for 28-tablet packs of both the 3.125mg and 6.25mg presentations falling by a third. However, the lowest price for the 6.25mg strength slumped by a more modest 17% to £0.25 (US\$0.36) – or less than £0.01 per tablet (see Figure 1) – and the lowest price of the 3.125mg pack was static at just £0.15 (see Figure 2).

Meanwhile, both the average and lowest prices for the higher 12.5mg strength of carvedilol were almost unchanged. At £0.80 per 28-tablet pack, the average price was only 5% below its February level. The best March price was also steady, rising by just 3% to £0.37.

Drug Tariff reimbursement prices for the two higher strengths of carvedilol – 12.5mg and 25mg – fall under category M, which is based on recent actual market prices; but the lower strengths fall under

category A. This is based on a weighted average of prices listed by Teva and Actavis as well as leading wholesalers AAH and Unichem.

While the March Drug Tariff prices for the 3.125mg and 6.25mg carvedilol strengths were £5.73 and £6.09, the price for the 12.5mg pack was only £1.55. This meant that pharmacists had an average profit margin on the reimbursement prices of the two lower strengths of about 90%. But the profit margin on the 12.5mg strength was only 48%. By shopping around, pharmacists could have increased their profit margins to over 95% for the two lower strengths. But the lowest price for carvedilol 12.5mg yielded a profit margin of 76%.

Two more category A products, glimepiride and ondansetron, saw their average prices rise in March, although the same could not be said for the lowest prices on offer (see Figures 1 and 3). **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Carvedilol tabs 3.125mg 28	£0.15	±0	£0.60	-33
Cetirizine tabs 10mg 30	£0.16	-6	£0.24	-25
Amitriptyline tabs 50mg 28	£0.30	+3	£0.61	-18
Amitriptyline tabs 25mg 28	£0.21	+5	£0.46	-18
Gabapentin caps 300mg 100	£2.59	±0	£4.54	-17
Amoxicillin caps 500mg 21	£0.35	-3	£0.67	-14

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-28 February and 1-25 March 2009 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 35 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-28 February

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Prednisolone tabs 1mg 28	£0.15	+7	£0.33	+33
Quinine bisulphate tabs 300mg 28	£0.91	+7	£1.38	+18
Ondansetron tabs 8mg 10	£1.49	+1	£21.74	+17
Ramipril tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.44	-2	£1.11	+16
Glimepiride tabs 1mg 30	£0.26	+4	£1.08	+12
Beclometasone 250µg (200 dose)	£1.25	-7	£7.89	+12

and 1-25 March 2009 in lowest and average UK market prices of about 120 commonly-dispensed generics. The basket specifically excludes the 'fast movers' shown below, but includes other presentations of the same products. Each average price was calculated from at least 21 data points (Source – WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.28	+17	£0.55	+9
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.22	±0	£0.34	±0
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.31	-6	£0.47	-2
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.25	-17	£0.69	-35
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.37	+3	£0.80	-5
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.28	+8	£0.59	+4
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.26	+13	£0.55	-5
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.44	+7	£0.75	-6
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.49	+20	£0.91	-2
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.31	+4	£2.27	-1
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	±0	£0.56	-6
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.55	+2	£2.17	-1
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.72	+3	£2.68	+5
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.89	-4	£3.10	-1
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£3.09	-6	£4.59	±0
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.75	-5	£1.05	-1
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.50	-4	£1.92	+1
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.17	-6	£0.27	-4
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	±0	£0.36	-2
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	±0	£0.56	-1
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.37	±0	£0.57	+2
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.10	+5	£1.79	+15
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.65	+3	£1.08	-4
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.65	+5	£0.80	-4
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£1.82	-13	£31.42	+9

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.79	-10	£1.77	-3
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.85	+18	£1.45	+6
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.30	+8	£2.15	+5
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.27	+4	£0.43	-1
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.35	±0	£0.56	+1
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.50	+2	£0.70	-2
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£1.39	-13	£3.71	-5
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.33	±0	£0.69	-1
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.42	-9	£0.93	-3
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.14	+40	£0.26	+9
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.22	+38	£0.34	+4
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.45	+10	£0.59	-10
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.75	±0	£1.07	±0
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£1.29	-4	£1.99	-8
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.33	+8	£1.71	±0

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