

Digoxin and trimethoprim prices take off

Some of the highest-ever monthly price rises were recorded for trimethoprim in February, and those for digoxin were not far behind. Independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors were paying last month more than eight-times the trade price for 28-tablet packs of trimethoprim 100mg they had been in January. Similarly, the average trade price of the 200mg strength was more than five-times higher. Digoxin prices also rocketed in 14-count packs (see Figure 2).

The Department of Health reacted quickly by granting price concessions for the two ingredients, which meant pharmacists were not out of pocket. Both ingredients were included in the monthly list of products that would be reimbursed at more than Drug Tariff prices. Trimethoprim 100mg tablets in 28-count packs were priced on average at £4.18 (US\$6.40) in the market, but would be reimbursed at £7.55. This compared to £0.92 in the Drug Tariff. The equivalent average trade prices for 6- and 14-count packs of trimethoprim

200mg were £2.01 and £5.19, which compared with concessionary prices of £3.10 and £7.25, and Drug Tariff prices of £0.44 and £1.03.

Digoxin prices were a little tighter. Independent pharmacists would have had to pay on average £4.63, £4.77 and £4.72 for 62.5µg, 125µg and 250µg packs of 28 digoxin tablets, but they would have only been reimbursed £4.20, £4.99 and £4.36 even at the concessionary prices. This would have meant them making dispensing losses on the lowest and highest strengths. These would have been small, however, compared with those they would have incurred at Drug Tariff prices of £1.44, £1.07 and £1.01.

Price movements among recent launches were small for the most part, with only the average price rise for irbesartan reaching double figures (see Figure 1). Even the most severe price falls were relatively modest (see Figure 3). Lansoprazole and omeprazole continued to attract the most price offers among 'fast movers' (see Figure 4). **G**

RECENT LAUNCHES				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Amorolfine lacquer 5% 5ml	£3.50	-3	£5.01	-3
Atorvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.49	±0	£0.79	-8
Candesartan tabs 8mg 28	£0.36	±0	£0.81	+3
Cilostazol tabs 100mg 56	£5.90	-33	£15.66	+2
Cyclizine tabs 50mg 100	£7.61	-2	£10.53	-2
Desloratadine tabs 5mg 30	£0.25	-17	£0.79	+6
Desogestrel tabs 75µg 84	£1.63	-1	£2.61	+3
Donepezil tabs 10mg 28	£0.56	±0	£1.13	-2
Entacapone tabs 200mg 30	£4.46	-2	£5.38	+2
Escitalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.53	-15	£1.09	-5
Hydroxychloroquine tabs 200mg 60	£3.18	-1	£4.15	+1
Irbesartan tabs 75mg 28	£0.35	-13	£0.78	+16
Latanoprost eye drops .005% 2.5ml	£0.89	±0	£1.61	+2
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£0.95	-3	£2.04	-9
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£0.97	-3	£1.57	+1
Naratriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£1.13	-6	£1.51	-4
Quetiapine tabs 25mg 60	£0.57	+27	£1.17	+2
Rabeprazole tabs 10mg 28	£1.17	-12	£1.85	±0
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£3.50	±0	£5.16	-2
Riluzole tabs 50mg 56	£13.75	-2	£25.08	±0
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£0.86	±0	£2.57	±0
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.36	-3	£0.68	+3
Telmisartan tabs 80mg 28	£0.79	-1	£1.81	-4
Tolterodine tabs 2mg 56	£1.45	±0	£2.37	-1
Zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£0.42	±0	£0.95	-4

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Trimethoprim tabs 100mg 28	£0.23	±0	£4.18	+748
Trimethoprim tabs 200mg 14	£0.20	+33	£5.19	+410
Digoxin tabs 250µg 28	£2.45	+880	£4.72	+249
Digoxin tabs 125µg 28	£2.45	+880	£4.77	+202
Trimethoprim tabs 200mg 6	£0.59	+31	£2.01	+165
Digoxin tabs 62.5µg 28	£0.95	+12	£4.63	+142

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Glimepiride tabs 3mg 30	£0.31	±0	£0.76	-42
Ondansetron tabs 8mg 10	£1.80	±0	£4.43	-28
Galantamine XL caps 24mg 28	£6.92	±0	£12.91	-25
Quinapril tabs 10mg 28	£0.59	-13	£1.13	-24
Quinapril tabs 5mg 28	£0.55	-5	£1.21	-24
Valsartan tabs 320mg 28	£5.31	-12	£8.64	-22

FAST MOVERS			
Product/Strength/Pack size	Price offers as at 28 February		
	December	January	February
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	126	159	160
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	100	149	144
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	91	144	134
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	102	137	122
Naproxen tabs 500mg 28	85	120	117
Amitriptyline tabs 25mg 28	97	109	116
Warfarin tabs 1mg 28	96	124	116
Tramadol caps 50mg 100	101	125	114
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	98	118	113
Gabapentin caps 300mg 100	87	108	112

Figure 1 (above): Comparison between the periods 1-31 January and 1-28 February 2015 of UK trade prices of the most recently-launched generics listed in category M of the Drug Tariff of pharmacy-reimbursement prices. Averages calculated from at least 38 data points. Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (centre right): Biggest average trade-price changes between 1-31 January and 1-28 February 2015. Averages calculated from at least 17 data points. Figure 4 (bottom right): Ranking of fastest-moving products subject to the most price offers made to independent UK pharmacists (one strength per ingredient; offers recorded by 28 February). Data for Figures 2, 3 and 4 from a basket of about 750 commonly-dispensed generics. Recently-launched products in Figure 1 excluded from Figures 2 and 3 (Source – WaveData).

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