

Drug Tariff makes mark on current prices

Category M of the Drug Tariff fixes the reimbursement prices for retail pharmacists and dispensing doctors using quarterly volume-weighted market prices. What is less clear, however, is how changes in these Drug Tariff prices, based on historical data up to six months old, affect current prices of generics in the marketplace.

In theory, there is no connection. But in practice there may be. Take levothyroxine, for example. In the latest October Drug Tariff, the reimbursement prices for 28-tablet packs of levothyroxine 50µg and 100µg both fell to £1.22 (US\$2.28). In the former case, this represented a drop of about 12%, but in the latter it was just £0.01.

In contrast, the Drug Tariff price of levothyroxine 25µg rose by

16% to £1.37. The effect on market prices was immediate. Average prices went up by 36% to £0.56 in the following month, and the lowest price increased by 9% to £0.24. This gave the product the biggest price rise in October (see Figure 3).

But as Figure 2 shows, the two levothyroxine products that were reimbursed at a lower price in October saw their value in the market decrease, making them the biggest fallers in the month. The only surprise was that the price of the 100µg product suffered more.

Bargains were to be had in ciprofloxacin, lamotrigine and ramipril (see Figure 1). Lansoprazole prices were down across the board, but carvedilol offered bargains in a generally rising market. **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Levothyroxine tabs 100µg 28	£0.10	-17%	£0.24	-19%
Levothyroxine tabs 50µg 28	£0.11	+10%	£0.25	-16%
Doxazosin tabs 4mg 28	£0.87	-13%	£1.88	-11%
Doxycycline caps 100mg 8	£0.36	-3%	£0.70	-5%
Nitrazepam tabs 5mg 28	£0.16	+7%	£0.27	-5%
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£2.88	±0%	£5.62	-4%

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Levothyroxine tabs 25µg 28	£0.24	+9%	£0.56	+36%
Salbutamol tabs 2mg 28	£1.70	+11%	£2.83	+30%
Salbutamol tabs 4mg 28	£2.20	±0%	£3.68	+26%
Clomipramine caps 10mg 28	£0.45	-24%	£1.23	+21%
Atenolol tabs 25mg 28	£0.08	±0%	£0.21	+21%
Digoxin tabs 62.5µg 28	£0.65	+2%	£1.20	+20%

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-30 September and 1-25 October 2006 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 18 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-30

September and 1-25 October 2006 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 26 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS					FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)	Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£2.29	-17%	£5.24	-18%	Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£2.09	-30%	£3.74	-10%
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.49	±0%	£0.67	-4%	Lisinopril tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.13	±0%	£0.26	+10%
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.70	-3%	£0.92	-7%	Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.15	±0%	£0.31	+8%
Carvedilol tabs 3.125mg 28	£0.40	-17%	£1.17	+14%	Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	±0%	£0.47	+5%
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.52	-26%	£1.42	+11%	Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.42	+8%	£0.77	+6%
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.79	-1%	£1.44	+10%	Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.83	±0%	£1.49	+7%
Carvedilol tabs 25mg 28	£1.05	+40%	£1.81	+8%	Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.79	-9%	£2.05	+8%
Ciprofloxacin tabs 250mg 10	£0.18	-28%	£0.49	+8%	Pravastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.98	+15%	£1.68	-1%
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.25	-24%	£0.63	+8%	Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.98	-10%	£2.46	-4%
Ciprofloxacin tabs 750mg 10	£0.69	±0%	£1.30	+8%	Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£2.84	+29%	£3.49	-4%
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.73	+6%	£1.49	±0%	Ramipril caps 1.25mg 28	£0.27	-13%	£0.47	+1%
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£1.05	-12%	£2.01	-6%	Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.24	-38%	£0.59	-1%
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£1.07	+8%	£2.45	+8%	Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.49	-2%	£0.74	±0%
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.35	-14%	£2.37	-1%	Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.62	±0%	£0.94	+1%
Clarithromycin tabs 500mg 14	£3.19	-5%	£4.83	+1%	Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.65	-10%	£1.59	+5%
Lamotrigine tabs 25mg 56	£0.99	-12%	£2.90	-3%	Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£1.09	-20%	£2.25	-12%
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.49	-24%	£3.93	-6%	Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.18	-10%	£0.40	+11%
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.50	-15%	£6.78	-5%	Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.35	±0%	£0.65	+13%
Lamotrigine tabs 200mg 56	£5.04	-8%	£14.77	±0%	Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.90	-3%	£1.45	+7%
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£1.55	-13%	£2.25	-16%	Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£2.99	-20%	£5.88	-5%

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 as its Pharma TouchStone service. This is designed to give customers of the service fast, accurate, real-time access to current generic prices.

■ **For further information** 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