

Lansoprazole prices undergo rapid rises

Lansoprazole is in short supply, judging by steep price rises for both the 15mg and 30mg strengths in February. As Figure 1 shows, the average price of 28-tablet packs of lansoprazole 30mg increased by 21% to £1.09 (US\$1.74) last month; while the average price of the equivalent 15mg strength rose by 45% to £0.61 (see Figure 3). Lowest prices for the two packs also saw double-digit increases.

Other fast risers were picked up by the Department of Health, which granted 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) status to betahistine 8mg and 16mg tablets, the biggest risers, whose average prices had skyrocketed during the month. This allowed pharmacists to dispense a more expensive alternative product and be reimbursed accordingly.

Nitrazepam 5mg tablets and tolbutamide 500mg tablets were both granted price concessions. The former's was £3.98 for a 28-tablet pack;

while the latter's was £23.98. Pharmacists would have done little better than break even on dispensing nitrazepam, but would have lost money on tolbutamide if they had paid the average price of £26.14.

The department also announced that esomeprazole, pioglitazone and valsartan would be added to category M of the Drug Tariff in April, basing their reimbursement prices on actual prices in the market.

Esomeprazole and valsartan are currently in category C, which means they are reimbursed at the originator's trade price; while pioglitazone is in category A, which takes into account the list prices of Actavis and Teva. Experience suggests that there could be a steep fall in prices of pioglitazone next month (**Generics bulletin**, 17 February 2012, page 25), and pharmacists' margins on the other two ingredients would shrink alarmingly.

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Prednisolone tabs 5mg 28	£0.25	-17	£0.60	-27
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.08	+14	£0.15	-14
Ranitidine tabs 150mg 60	£0.62	-10	£1.06	-13
Atenolol tabs 25mg 28	£0.10	+11	£0.13	-13
Propranolol tabs 10mg 28	£0.15	±0	£0.23	-12
Propranolol tabs 40mg 28	£0.18	±0	£0.26	-10

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Betahistine tabs 16mg 84	£1.35	+5	£14.66	+498
Betahistine tabs 8mg 120	£1.78	±0	£13.10	+215
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.40	+18	£0.61	+45
Tolbutamide tabs 500mg 28	£11.29	±0	£26.14	+36
Trazodone tabs 150mg 28	£2.44	+2	£3.39	+16
Nitrazepam tabs 5mg 28	£2.40	+380	£3.79	+15

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 January 2012 and 1-29 February 2012 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 17 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31

January 2012 and 1-29 February 2012 in lowest and average UK trade 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 24 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.19	±0	£0.27	-9
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.20	±0	£0.28	-3
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.47	±0	£0.68	-9
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.30	±0	£0.44	+5
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.23	-4	£0.58	+8
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£0.49	-8	£1.32	-4
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 30	£1.12	±0	£1.34	-3
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.28	±0	£0.41	±0
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£0.79	-6	£1.03	-4
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.19	±0	£0.27	-14
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.42	±0	£2.02	+9
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.48	±0	£0.76	-2
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£1.70	-11	£2.44	-3
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.86	+15	£1.09	+21
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.30	±0	£0.40	-2
Losartan tabs 50mg 28	£0.59	+64	£0.91	+32
Losartan tabs 100mg 28	£0.51	±0	£1.22	+10
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.44	-2	£0.58	-5
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.79	+1	£1.04	±0
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.53	-2	£0.62	-2
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.27	-3	£3.85	-4
Pantoprazole tabs 20mg 28	£0.41	±0	£0.54	+2
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.83	-1	£1.13	±0
Pramipexole tabs 180µg 30	£0.73	±0	£1.66	+3
Pramipexole tabs 700µg 30	£2.50	-2	£5.00	-2

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.99	-5	£1.34	±0
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.47	-2	£0.56	-5
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£0.48	-9	£0.71	-1
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.72	-5	£1.18	-4
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.55	-2	£0.87	-24
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.19	±0	£0.25	-4
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.25	-4	£0.41	-3
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.63	-3	£0.90	-5
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.73	±0	£0.90	-4
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£0.89	-7	£1.17	-7
Topiramate tabs 50mg 60	£1.22	±0	£2.26	+6
Topiramate tabs 100mg 60	£1.97	±0	£3.09	+5
Venlafaxine tabs 37.5mg 56	£1.52	-1	£2.17	-2
Venlafaxine XL caps 75mg 28	£0.60	+15	£1.19	+11
Venlafaxine XL caps 150mg 28	£1.29	+16	£2.30	+9

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