

Newcomers experience sharp price falls

Aripiprazole led the price falls among recently-launched products last month, with its average and lowest trade prices falling by nearly a quarter and by more than a third respectively (see Figure 1). Eplerenone was another newish generic experiencing similar price declines as was escitalopram. The only significant price rises in this group were for memantine and naratriptan, which both saw price offers to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors withdrawn and their lowest trade prices increase accordingly.

Both aripiprazole and eplerenone were added to category M of the Drug Tariff of pharmacy-reimbursement prices from 1 July – based on historical market prices – and since that move their actual trade prices have declined markedly (**Generics bulletin**, 7 August 2015, page 27). Pharmacists' dispensing profit margins for 28-tablet packs of aripiprazole 10mg were 55% on average in August and as high as 84% for those that bought at the lowest price available.

Similarly, 28-tablet packs of eplerenone 25mg had a reimbursement price of £44.99 (US\$68.73) last month, which gave pharmacists a margin of 35% on average and potentially as high as 62%.

Other notable price fallers in August were furosemide 20mg, valsartan 80mg and metformin 500mg (see Figure 3), but their price declines paled beside the biggest price rises. Average cimetidine prices leapt, as did those for metoprolol (see Figure 2). Cimetidine 400mg tablets were on the list of price concessions for August – overriding the Drug Tariff for the month – at £6.29. This easily covered their average trade price of £4.36, according to WaveData. Their Drug Tariff price of £1.85 meanwhile would not have done. Nine other ingredients, including fosinopril and lamotrigine, were also on the list.

Furosemide was also the subject of some of the most price offers made in August, but much of the market activity centred on the main proton-pump inhibitors (see Figure 4).

RECENT LAUNCHES				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Amorolfine lacquer 5% 5ml	£3.64	±0	£5.77	±0
Aripiprazole tabs 10mg 28	£11.58	-35	£33.39	-22
Atorvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.47	+7	0.72	-12
Candesartan tabs 8mg 28	£0.35	-3	£0.62	-9
Celecoxib caps 200mg 30	£0.84	-15	£2.27	+3
Cilostazol tabs 100mg 56	£3.99	+9	£7.91	-13
Cyclizine tabs 50mg 100	£7.00	-3	£9.56	-5
Desogestrel tabs 75µg 84	£1.50	+9	£2.64	+5
Entacapone tabs 200mg 30	£4.20	+6	£5.06	±0
Eplerenone tabs 25mg 28	£16.99	-26	£29.13	-11
Escitalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.28	-13	£0.80	-15
Hydroxychloroquine tabs 200mg 60	£2.77	-6	£3.78	-3
Irbesartan tabs 75mg 28	£0.36	±0	£0.72	-7
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£0.58	+29	£1.25	-8
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£0.90	+5	£1.42	-4
Naratriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£1.18	+23	£1.48	+3
Quetiapine tabs 25mg 60	£0.49	-18	£1.11	-4
Rabeprazole tabs 10mg 28	£1.14	-2	£1.58	-2
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£3.43	-5	£4.89	+1
Riluzole tabs 50mg 56	£13.95	+3	£22.31	-3
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£0.85	±0	£2.32	-3
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.31	-3	£0.65	-10
Telmisartan tabs 80mg 28	£0.77	-1	£1.72	-8
Tolterodine tabs 2mg 56	£1.44	-5	£2.17	-5
Zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£0.42	+8	£0.99	+6

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Cimetidine tabs 200mg 60	£0.38	±0	£1.43	+123
Ibuprofen gel 5% 100g	£0.69	-1	£3.30	+108
Cimetidine tabs 400mg 60	£0.53	±0	£4.36	+80
Cimetidine tabs 800mg 30	£0.86	-9	£2.99	+54
Metoprolol tabs 50mg 56	£1.26	-3	£4.60	+49
Metoprolol tabs 50mg 28	£0.71	±0	£2.20	+48

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Furosemide tabs 20mg 28	£0.09	-10	£0.23	-34
Chloramphenicol drops 0.5% 10ml	£0.32	-3	£0.98	-25
Valsartan caps 80mg 28	£0.39	-20	£1.94	-23
Olanzapine OD tabs S/F 5mg 28	£0.56	+12	£0.94	-22
Glycerol suppositories 4g 12	£0.52	-5	£1.02	-21
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.58	-19	£1.66	-21

FAST MOVERS			
Product/Strength/Pack size	Price offers as at 31 August		
	June	July	August
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	108	109	100
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	100	98	88
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	75	85	84
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	97	89	83
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	88	88	81
Warfarin tabs 1mg 28	89	93	77
Naproxen tabs 500mg 28	81	78	76
Furosemide tabs 40mg 28	82	77	75
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	86	84	74
Paracetamol caplets 500mg 100	73	72	74

Figure 1 (above): Comparison between the periods 1-31 July and 1-31 August 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 23 data points. Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (centre right): Biggest average trade-price changes between 1-31 July and 1-31 August 2015. Averages calculated from at least 13 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 31 August). 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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