

# Omeprazole prices continue to increase

Average prices for omeprazole capsules continued their steep rise in December, following increases of as much as 75% in November (*Generics bulletin*, 11 December 2009, page 19). The two lower 10mg and 20mg strengths cost independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors about a third more on average for 28-capsule packs in December than in the previous month (see Figure 1), while the highest 40mg strength cost nearly half as much again (see Figure 3).

Such has been the effect on pharmacists' margins that the Department of Health announced on 18 December that the Drug Tariff reimbursement price for omeprazole 20mg capsules during December would be raised from £1.77 (US\$2.82) to £3.99. As we had reported earlier, price rises had reduced pharmacists' margins on the product to just 18%, compared with 53% a month earlier.

Since then, the latest quarterly Drug Tariff has been published. However, it has not addressed the worsening omeprazole problem. Indeed, you might say it has been made marginally worse, as the reimbursement price of omeprazole 20mg capsules has been reduced by one penny to £1.76. The 10mg strength has remained at £1.77, but the 40mg strength has gone up from £2.12 to £2.22.

At December prices, the current average pharmacy margins are 12% for the 10mg strength and 11% for 40mg capsules. Unfortunately, however, pharmacists will be losing £0.16 on every pack of omeprazole 20mg capsules they dispense.

Elsewhere, the average prices of amlodipine and enalapril tablets rose sharply last month, while those of 10-tablet packs of ondansetron 8mg tablets fell by more than a fifth (see Figure 2). G

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Metoclopramide tabs 10mg 28	£0.17	±0	£0.33	-21
Ondansetron tabs 8mg 10	£1.99	±0	£14.85	-21
Bisoprolol tabs 5mg 28	£0.28	±0	£0.52	-20
Amitriptyline tabs 25mg 28	£0.18	±0	£0.27	-12
Folic acid tabs 5mg 28	£0.19	+12	£0.29	-12
Amitriptyline tabs 50mg 28	£0.25	-4	£0.36	-11

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-30 November and 1-31 December 2009 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 27 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Allopurinol tabs 100mg 28	£0.22	+29	£0.63	+79
Omeprazole caps 40mg 7	£0.99	+11	£1.97	+49
Nitrazepam tabs 5mg 28	£0.17	±0	£0.51	+30
Nizatidine caps 150mg 30	£5.35	+189	£6.56	+28
Enalapril tabs 5mg 28	£0.18	±0	£0.38	+20
Enalapril tabs 10mg 28	£0.29	±0	£0.47	+20

1-30 November and 1-31 December 2009 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 13 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.23	+5	£0.38	+11
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.22	+16	£0.63	+91
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.33	+22	£0.67	+63
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.38	+3	£0.55	-15
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.38	+9	£0.67	+24
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.28	±0	£0.58	-1
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	+4	£0.44	-3
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.38	±0	£0.53	-4
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.45	-4	£0.78	±0
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.20	±0	£1.84	-8
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	+3	£0.56	+17
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.60	+100	£2.07	+2
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.64	+3	£1.51	+13
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.85	+12	£2.81	+5
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.79	+7	£4.02	+2
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.65	+8	£0.78	-4
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.29	-2	£1.55	-4
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.14	-13	£0.25	+5
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.19	±0	£0.32	+7
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.29	+38	£0.51	+7
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.38	±0	£0.56	+8
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.24	±0	£2.01	+5
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.61	±0	£1.56	+34
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.66	±0	£1.92	+32
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.61	±0	£20.10	+7

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.55	-15	£1.48	+4
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£1.29	+30	£1.67	+5
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.80	±0	£2.40	+5
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.26	±0	£0.46	+20
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.33	+3	£0.57	+15
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.48	-2	£0.66	+3
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.69	-15	£2.07	+6
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.32	+7	£0.61	-7
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.45	-2	£0.80	-9
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.14	+17	£0.24	+10
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.22	+5	£0.31	+6
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.42	+2	£0.59	+14
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.77	+7	£1.24	+9
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.89	±0	£1.81	+11
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.29	+3	£1.62	+1

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