

Pregabalin plummets but zolmitriptan soars

Back in January, we reported “pregabalin and zolmitriptan prices take off” as three strengths of the former and two pack sizes of zolmitriptan 2.5mg recorded monthly average price rises that ranged up to nearly 600% (*Generics bulletin*, 20 January 2017, page 14).

Two months later, the average price of zolmitriptan 2.5mg has kept on rising, but pregabalin prices have plummeted back towards their former level (see Figures 2 and 3). When the average price of 12-tablet packs of zolmitriptan 2.5mg hit £16.24 (US\$19.81) in December 2016, it was after a stratospheric rise of 571%. February’s price increase was a more modest 163%, but the product’s average price has kept on rising in the meantime to £28.75 last month. Independent pharmacists were paying more than £2 per zolmitriptan 2.5mg tablet when just a few months earlier they were buying the whole pack for less than £1.

December’s 300% trade price rise to just over £30 on average for

84-capsule packs of pregabalin 25mg reversed in direction by 56% last month to £8.39. The fibromyalgia drug’s price still has some way to fall, however, before independent pharmacists are once again certain of being able to buy it for less than £2 a pack.

Among the newer additions to category M of the Drug Tariff, 28-tablet packs of rasagiline 1mg were notable for the 26% fall in their average trade price (see Figure 1). With the product’s lowest price dropping less quickly by 11%, it would seem that more than one supplier sharpened their competitive edge. Price offers were withdrawn on 28-tablet packs of escitalopram 10mg and rabeprazole 10mg, but neither move had a significant effect on the products’ average prices.

Gabapentin challenged for the highest number of price offers in February, but the rankings were still dominated by statins and proton-pump inhibitors (see Figure 4).

RECENT LAUNCHES				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Aripiprazole tabs 10mg 28	£0.59	+4	£1.23	+2
Benzydamine 0.15% 300ml	£4.95	+7	£5.69	±0
Carbimazole tabs 5mg 100	£48.99	±0	£58.62	-7
Celecoxib caps 200mg 30	£0.89	+9	£1.55	+1
Cilostazol tabs 100mg 56	£2.09	±0	£3.61	+1
Cyclizine tabs 50mg 100	£5.31	±0	£8.44	+2
Desogestrel tabs 75µg 84	£1.16	-3	£1.99	+5
Duloxetine caps 30mg 28	£0.91	-1	£1.89	+3
Entacapone tabs 200mg 30	£3.19	+1	£4.36	-13
Eplerenone tabs 25mg 28	£2.93	+13	£4.47	-8
Escitalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.33	+14	£0.85	+5
Frovatriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£8.29	±0	£10.66	-1
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£0.60	±0	£1.05	+3
Mometasone furoate 0.1% 30g	£1.13	-10	£1.96	-3
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£0.88	-7	£1.53	-7
Nefopam tabs 30mg 90	£28.50	-7	£46.60	-6
Nortriptyline tabs 10mg 100	£21.50	±0	£31.03	-6
Oxcarbazepine tabs 300mg 50	£4.97	+2	£6.26	+2
Rabeprazole tabs 10mg 28	£0.70	+15	£1.17	+2
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£2.50	±0	£3.75	+11
Rasagiline tabs 1mg 28	£1.10	-11	£2.91	-26
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£0.78	+4	£1.70	+4
Sevelamer tabs 800mg 180	£26.00	-7	£45.97	-12
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.24	+4	£0.55	+2
Telmisartan tabs 80mg 28	£1.16	+10	£1.78	+1

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg 12	£1.94	+25	£28.75	+163
Bupirone tabs 10mg 30	£3.24	+5	£11.66	+153
Metformin SR tabs 500mg 28	£0.57	±0	£2.26	+90
Pramipexole tabs 350µg 30	£0.75	+42	£7.62	+36
Donepezil o/d tabs 5mg 28	£1.62	+14	£4.65	+32
Candesartan tabs 32mg 28	£0.82	+4	£1.86	+31

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pregabalin caps 50mg 84	£1.99	+9	£6.92	-57
Pregabalin caps 25mg 84	£2.29	+89	£8.39	-56
Pregabalin caps 100mg 84	£2.35	+28	£7.08	-54
Pregabalin caps 25mg 56	£1.22	+9	£5.57	-49
Pregabalin caps 200mg 84	£2.95	+61	£8.91	-48
Pregabalin caps 150mg 56	£1.75	-12	£5.67	-48

FAST MOVERS			
Product/Strength/Pack size	Price offers as at 28 February 2017		
	December	January	February
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	120	139	128
Atorvastatin tabs 40mg 28	114	113	108
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	104	111	107
Gabapentin caps 300mg 100	93	102	103
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	95	110	102
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	90	102	102
Hydrocortisone tabs 10mg 30	95	97	102
Paracetamol caps 500mg 100	80	101	99
Amitriptyline tabs 25mg 28	96	103	94
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	78	90	92

Figure 1 (above): Comparison between the periods 1-31 January 2017 and 1-28 February 2017 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 29 data points. Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (centre right): Biggest average trade-price changes between 1-31 January 2017 and 1-28 February 2017. Averages calculated from at least 20 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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