

Prices rise as citalopram stocks shrink

Four products were granted the concession of 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) status in November by the UK Department of Health as a result of shortages in the market. These were gabapentin 100mg and 400mg capsules, citalopram 20mg tablets and tamoxifen 20mg tablets. The concession allows pharmacists to dispense a more expensive alternative product and to be reimbursed accordingly.

A glance at Figure 1 illustrates the problem. All three strengths of citalopram were affected, but the prices of the 20mg strength in particular rocketed upwards. At £4.63 (US\$7.24), the average trade price of a 28-tablet pack of citalopram 20mg in November was more than three-times higher than it had been a month earlier.

Without the concession, pharmacists would have been badly out of pocket because the Drug Tariff reimbursement price of the product

was only £1.30. Historically, citalopram prices have been low, and the antidepressant's reimbursement price had recently been reduced still further. As a member of category M of the Drug Tariff, citalopram's price had been reduced from £1.46, which was based on historical quarterly market data provided by generics firms. Actual market prices had then been uplifted to provide a pharmacy profit margin.

Taking the market as a whole, price falls were few and quite modest in November. Glimepiride was a notable exception, with all four strengths appearing in Figures 1 and 2. Metformin was another product to appear in two tables - Figures 1 and 3 - but for reason of its double-digit average price increases. Prices for tamoxifen 20mg that was granted an NCSO concession rose sharply, while gabapentin 100mg was just outside Figure 3 with an 18% average price rise to £6.54. G

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.18	-22	£0.32	-16
Glimepiride tabs 2mg 30	£0.32	+10	£0.54	-15
Glimepiride tabs 3mg 30	£0.37	-12	£1.06	-15
Zolpidem tabs 5mg 28	£0.49	±0	£0.56	-15
Glimepiride tabs 1mg 30	£0.24	±0	£0.52	-14
Loperamide caps 2mg 30	£0.25	±0	£0.43	-13

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-31 October 2010 and 1-24 November 2010 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 11 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-31

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Ciprofloxacin tabs 750mg 10	£0.61	±0	£1.44	+63
Amiloride tabs 5mg 28	£0.26	+63	£0.51	+33
Metformin tabs 500mg 28	£0.22	±0	£0.41	+30
Tamoxifen tabs 20mg 30	£1.99	+34	£3.75	+26
Isosorbide tabs 10mg 56	£0.26	+4	£0.50	+25
Propranolol tabs 40mg 28	£0.17	-6	£0.36	+25

October 2010 and 1-24 November 2010 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 21 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.30	+30	£0.56	+36
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.20	±0	£0.30	±0
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.25	-11	£0.38	-3
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.40	+5	£0.49	±0
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.46	±0	£0.62	-3
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.25	-7	£0.39	-13
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.44	+52	£0.99	+54
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£1.10	+108	£4.63	+259
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.69	+17	£1.33	+53
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.02	-5	£1.45	-2
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.26	-10	£0.42	-3
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.45	±0	£1.93	±0
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.61	±0	£0.89	-8
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.52	+1	£2.21	+3
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£1.59	+2	£3.66	+1
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.44	±0	£0.59	+5
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.99	-4	£1.26	+5
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.18	±0	£0.29	+11
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.19	±0	£0.34	+12
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.51	+9
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.52	+2	£0.83	+16
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.79	-8	£1.26	+1
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.60	-19	£0.94	+1
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.75	±0	£1.04	+9
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.95	-1	£4.62	-6

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.95	+1	£1.41	+7
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.85	-9	£1.27	-2
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.29	-7	£1.84	+2
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.35	+6	£0.57	+11
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.48	+4	£0.63	+3
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.56	-2	£0.71	±0
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.78	-9	£1.53	±0
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.44	±0	£0.91	-4
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.70	±0	£1.16	+4
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.17	+13	£0.21	+3
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.22	±0	£0.28	+2
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.40	+3	£0.50	+4
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.72	+1	£0.92	-1
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.77	-3	£1.13	+7
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.09	-3	£1.42	+4

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