

Rizatriptan's price fall is pharmacy's gain

At a time when cuts in the pharmacy reimbursement prices of generic medicines will save the UK around £120 million (US\$198 million) annually (see page 10), rizatriptan was one of the few products to increase its Drug Tariff price this month. Yet a month earlier in March, it had experienced dramatic price falls in the marketplace.

Rizatriptan has been a minor problem for the authorities since its generic launch last August. As we outlined at the beginning of the year, its prices had been somewhat volatile. The three-tablet packs of rizatriptan 10mg had started the new year with an average trade price of £7.63 and a lowest available trade price of £1.49 (**Generics bulletin**, 3 February 2014, page 21). But the average and lowest trade prices for the product had previously been as low as £4.72 and £0.89.

When it was moved to category M of the Drug Tariff in January –

based on historical weighted prices in the market – its reimbursement price was pitched at £1.58, an 88% cut on the equivalent figure at the end of 2013. Some pharmacists may have made £0.09 for dispensing rizatriptan, but on average they would have made a £6.05 dispensing loss.

As it has lowered the overall profit pharmacists make each year from dispensing generics, the Department of Health has also corrected its rizatriptan price in the other direction. The latest reimbursement price is £5.79, which is more than a 250% increase. Meanwhile, however, the average trade price fell by 46% in March to just £2.31, giving pharmacists a handsome 60% dispensing margin. Similarly, other rizatriptan presentations also dropped rapidly in price (see Figure 2).

Presentations of co-amoxiclav 250mg/125mg in 21-tablet packs experienced the biggest price rises last month (see Figure 3). **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 6	£1.36	-53	£5.70	-38
Rizatriptan tabs 5mg 6	£2.89	-1	£9.30	-30
Aspirin disp tabs 75mg 1,000	£1.42	±0	£2.12	-24
Cimetidine tabs 200mg 60	£0.79	-2	£1.22	-23
Ibuprofen gel 5% 100g	£0.72	+3	£1.35	-21
Esomeprazole caps 20mg 28	£2.89	+1	£5.37	-20

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-28 February 2014 and 1-25 March 2014 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 31 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-28 February

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Co-Amoxiclav tabs 250/125mg 21	£2.09	+36	£7.78	+133
Tamoxifen tabs 20mg 30	£1.71	+10	£4.35	+74
Co-Amilofruse tabs 5/40mg 56	£0.91	+94	£1.42	+49
Warfarin tabs 1mg 28	£0.16	±0	£0.36	+43
Metformin tabs 500mg 28	£0.31	+29	£0.76	+41
Hydroxocobalamin 1mg/ml 5	£3.60	+14	£6.68	+40

2014 and 1-25 March 2014 in lowest and average UK trade prices of about 748 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 (%)
Anastrozole tabs 1mg 28	£0.98	-10	£1.74	+3
Atorvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.57	+10	£0.94	+8
Bicalutamide tabs 50mg 28	£1.34	+35	£2.38	+2
Buprenorphine tabs 2mg 7	£0.79	-5	£1.99	±0
Candesartan tabs 8mg 28	£0.67	-7	£1.04	-4
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 28	£0.94	-8	£1.27	-1
Cyclizine tabs 50mg 100	£7.99	-6	£11.19	±0
Desloratadine tabs 5mg 30	£0.43	-4	£0.83	-12
Donepezil tabs 10mg 28	£0.76	-13	£1.47	-1
Dorzolamide eye drops 2% 5ml	£1.18	+1	£1.93	+3
Entacapone tabs 200mg 30	£5.95	-1	£6.82	-1
Esomeprazole tabs 40mg 28	£2.35	-19	£4.21	-5
Exemestane tabs 25mg 30	£3.16	+7	£5.90	+7
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£0.67	±0	£1.02	-2
Irbesartan tabs 75mg 28	£0.53	-2	£0.79	-4
Latanoprost eye drops .005% 2.5ml	£0.78	-8	£1.47	±0
Lercanidipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.69	±0	£1.05	-4
Letrozole tabs 2.5mg 14	£0.99	-14	£1.56	-2
Levetiracetam tabs 500mg 60	£2.54	+24	£4.64	+8
Losartan tabs 100mg 28	£0.55	+6	£0.97	+4
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£6.50	±0	£9.87	-18
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£1.13	-2	£1.76	+5
Mycophenolate tabs 500mg 50	£8.45	-5	£12.01	+2
Naratriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£0.86	+41	£1.43	+6
Nebivolol tabs 5mg 28	£0.71	±0	£1.13	-2

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Olanzapine tabs 5mg 28	£0.34	-6	£0.73	+8
Pioglitazone tabs 15mg 28	£0.49	-2	£0.87	-8
Pramipexole tabs 700µg 30	£1.25	-22	£2.74	-1
Quetiapine tabs 25mg 60	£0.42	-7	£1.03	±0
Rabeprazole tabs 10mg 28	£0.99	-6	£1.75	±0
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£7.49	-4	£10.94	-6
Riluzole tabs 50mg 56	£29.08	±0	£40.41	-3
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£0.45	±0	£0.74	-1
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£1.49	+1	£2.31	-46
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.44	+2	£0.71	-4
Tolterodine tabs 2mg 56	£1.66	-2	£2.87	-6
Topiramate tabs 25mg 60	£1.99	±0	£2.53	-1
Valsartan caps 80mg 28	£0.86	±0	£1.93	+3
Venlafaxine tabs 75mg 56	£1.64	-1	£2.26	-1
Zolmitriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£0.44	±0	£0.94	-4

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