

UK prices have ups and downs in May

Mirtazapine and risperidone prices moved sharply in opposite directions last month, with suppliers driving double-digit changes in the generics' prices to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors during May. Almost a fifth was added to the lowest price of 28-tablet packs of mirtazapine 30mg as the best April offer was withdrawn (see Figure 1). But at £1.29 (US\$2.05), the antidepressant was still available at a large discount to the reimbursement price paid by the National Health Service (NHS) to dispensers.

The current reimbursement price for the product in category M of the Drug Tariff is £2.69, giving dispensers a 52% profit margin on the lowest price available during May. Like many other generics in category M – based on actual market prices – the average price of mirtazapine 30mg was close to its lowest price. After a much smaller

7% price rise, the average was £2.06, providing a 23% profit margin.

Risperidone is a category A product whose reimbursement price is based on list prices. Dispensers' profit margins are often considerably higher for category A products, especially after a 22% fall in the best price to £0.99 for a 60-tablet pack of risperidone 2mg.

The 12% decline in the product's average trade price to £3.32 meant dispensers were still making an 89% profit margin on average for the plain 2mg strength of the antipsychotic, despite a falling reimbursement price in recent months to £30.53 for a 60-tablet pack.

Unlike risperidone, most of the biggest average price falls were not associated with a rapid change in the lowest price available (see Figure 2). The same was true of the biggest average price rises, which were not reflected in price offers being withdrawn (see Figure 3). **G**

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Ferrous sulphate tabs 200mg 28	£0.25	±0	£0.46	-20
Metformin tabs 500mg 28	£0.15	-6	£0.22	-17
Levthyroxine tabs 25µg 28	£1.01	-1	£1.20	-15
Paracetamol tabs 500mg 100	£0.34	+6	£0.68	-14
Amitriptyline tabs 50mg 28	£0.28	-3	£0.50	-13
Clotrimazole cream 1% 20g	£0.48	-11	£0.89	-13

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-30 April and 1-20 May 2009 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 32 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-30 April and 1-20

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Ramipril tabs 1.25mg 28	£0.38	-7	£1.03	+24
Paracetamol tabs 500mg 60	£1.82	-2	£2.86	+23
Carvedilol tabs 3.125mg 28	£0.10	±0	£0.67	+23
Co-amilofruse tabs 2.5/20mg 28	£0.29	+4	£0.60	+23
Ranitidine tabs 300mg 30	£0.12	±0	£0.73	+22
Gabapentin caps 300mg 100	£2.25	-2	£4.79	+20

May 2009 in lowest and average UK market 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	£0.26	-7	£0.59	+16
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£0.22	±0	£0.30	-8
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.33	+3	£0.45	+1
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.28	-3	£0.75	+5
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.36	±0	£0.75	-6
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.27	±0	£0.63	±0
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	-8	£0.54	-16
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.42	-9	£0.65	-24
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£0.50	+11	£0.95	-7
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£1.33	+4	£2.44	+3
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.36	+6	£0.53	+4
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.39	-6	£2.16	-3
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.59	+5	£2.62	±0
Lamotrigine tabs 50mg 56	£1.60	-19	£3.01	-4
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.94	-9	£4.43	±0
Lansoprazole caps 15mg 28	£0.72	-9	£0.98	-8
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£1.49	-1	£1.80	-3
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.17	+6	£0.28	+4
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.22	+10	£0.33	-11
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.55	-18
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.37	±0	£0.57	±0
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£1.29	+19	£2.06	+7
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£0.64	-2	£1.01	-13
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.61	-6	£0.83	+5
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£1.63	-8	£33.57	-2

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.68	-7	£1.74	+5
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.84	-6	£1.38	-3
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.25	-10	£1.91	-10
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.26	±0	£0.42	-6
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.34	±0	£0.55	-2
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.49	±0	£0.70	±0
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.99	-22	£3.32	-12
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	£0.29	-3	£0.77	+6
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.45	±0	£1.08	+11
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.15	-6	£0.25	-5
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.21	±0	£0.31	-11
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.45	±0	£0.56	-8
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.69	-4	£1.18	+5
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£1.19	-5	£2.06	+6
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.19	+1	£1.66	-1

WANT MORE LIKE THIS?

Detailed product price comparisons and other price analyses are available at www.wavedata.net.

To find out more about subscribing, please email your contact details to info@wavedata.co.uk and quote 'GB online enquiry' in the title line.

■ For further information see www.wavedata.co.uk.

Alternatively, contact Charles Joynson at WaveData Limited, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1702 425125.

E-mail cjoynson@wavedata.co.uk.

