

Risedronate receives a low-cost launch

Actavis made sure of making an impact on day one of risedronate's 16 December 2010 generic launch in the UK by offering a special introductory price of just £2.37 (US\$3.77) for the four-tablet version of the osteoporosis treatment's weekly 35mg strength.

This not only undercut the brand's trade price by almost 90%, but was also totally out of line with Teva's opening gambit of £11.47, which was nearly five-times higher.

WaveData noted that Sandoz had waited until 1 January 2011 before making a market entrance. However, the newcomer gave its risedronate 35mg product a trade price of £11.45, which matched Teva's in all but a few extra pence.

Mylan said it had launched on day one both 28-tablet packs of risedronate 5mg as well as four-tablet packs of risedronate 35mg – two of the standard sizes of the brand original – and invited potential customers to contact it for prices. Its equivalent 35mg price on 1 January was £6.69, while the 5mg pack was £6.30. Procter & Gamble's Actonel is also available as 28-tablet packs of risedronate 30mg, but no generics prices have been recorded by WaveData.

Charles Joynson, WaveData's managing director, said that the lowest recorded price offered to independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors had been £1.99 for packs of four risedronate 35mg tablets. This figure had come from a wholesaler and represented a 90% discount on the equivalent trade price for the brand.

As Figure 1 shows, the average daily trade price for the product had fallen to about £3.00 by mid-January. This represented a price fall of about 84% within a month of generic launch.

Meanwhile, generic pramipexole was launched on the same day as risedronate in the UK. All four strengths of the Parkinson's disease treatment were launched on day one by Actavis and Teva, the UK's leading players, although this time their prices varied only by a matter of pence. Actavis noted that Mirapexin/Sifrol sales in the European Union totalled €339 million (US\$446 million) in the year ended 30 September 2010 (**Generics bulletin**, 14 January 2011, page 17).

Boehringer Ingelheim's Mirapexin has a UK trade price of £9.55 for a 30-tablet pack of the 0.88µg strength. Teva offered a 40% discount on day one with a trade price of £5.73, but Actavis settled on £5.63, which was 41% less than the equivalent brand price (see Figure 2).

An identical day-one pricing approach was taken by the two companies for the other three 180µg, 350µg and 700µg strengths in 30-tablet packs, with Actavis consistently undercutting its rival by the narrowest of margins. Actavis changed its tactics on 1 January this year, however, by cutting its prices on all four strengths such that it was offering a 53% discount to the brand. Its 88µg price, for example, was reduced from £5.63 to £4.50. Teva, meanwhile, continued to hold firm with a 40% reduction (see Figures 3 and 4).

Within a month of launch, the average generic price of pramipexole 88µg had sunk to £4.24 from a brand price of £9.55 for 30-tablet packs, representing a discount of 56%. Average discounts for the other three strengths were similar at between 55% and 58%. The lowest prices, however, offered at least a 76% discount, with the 700µg strength providing the highest 81% discount on the brand price.

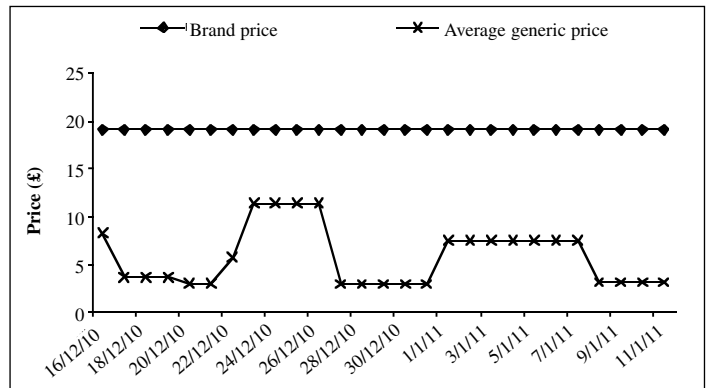


Figure 1: Daily price data for four-tablet packs of risedronate 35mg from generic launch, showing the average generic and the brand prices (Source – WaveData)

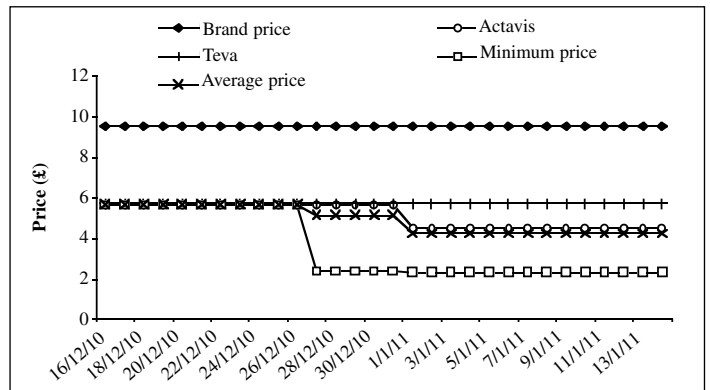


Figure 2: Daily prices for 30-tablet packs of pramipexole 88µg from generic launch, showing the generic price decay compared with the brand (Source – WaveData)

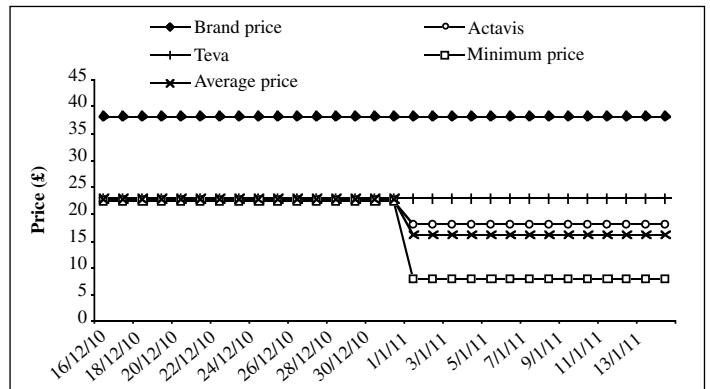


Figure 3: Daily prices for 30-tablet packs of pramipexole 350µg from generic launch, showing the generic price decay compared with the brand (Source – WaveData)

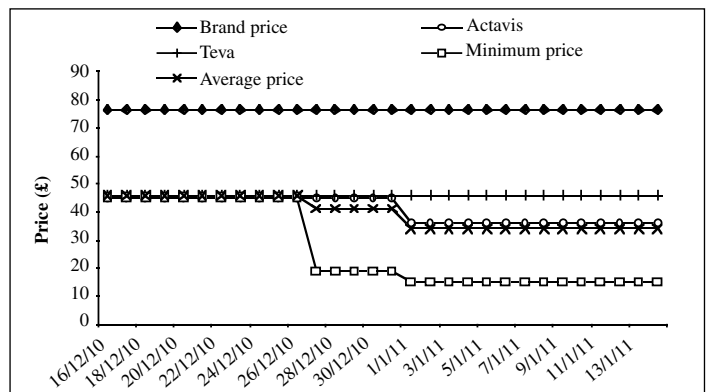


Figure 2: Daily prices for 30-tablet packs of pramipexole 700µg from generic launch, showing the generic price decay compared with the brand (Source – WaveData)

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