

Dispensing GPs set the pace in import buying



Dispensing doctors continue to command the best prices in generics, and they seem to be strengthening their buying power in imports, too, stealing the lead in this area from pharmacies. In terms of generics, in the most recent market analysis (to end February), there were no stand-out purchase price risers or fallers.

However, among the risers there were three packs of metoprolol tabs, as well as two packs each of carvedilol, ferrous fumarate and ibandronic acid tabs, and of celecoxib caps. Among the fallers were two packs each of ethambutol tabs and rivastigmine caps.

Fallers

Prices for levothyroxine tabs 12.5mcg x28 fell dramatically in March as the English drug tariff dropped from £3.81 to £2.56. Most key suppliers reduced their prices at the same time, and the best deals below £1.50 were on offer from Alliance, OTC Direct, Almus, Forte Direct, Teva, Numark and Munro.

Price changes in March for nefopam tabs 30mg x90 were a mixed picture, but with more suppliers reducing prices than increasing them, the net effect was a price drop of 56 per cent. The best offers below £4.50 were from Eclipse, Target, Numark, DE, Beta, B&S, Alliance, Ethigen and Trident.

A wide range of prices were on offer for ethambutol tabs 400mg x56 in March: from the most expensive at £42.74 to the cheapest of £9.80. However, the lowest prices were so low it could have been short dated stock. Deals below £17.00 were on offer in March from Alliance, Almus, Ethigen and DE.

Risers

The average offer prices for risedronate sodium tabs 35mg x4 rose in March by 976 per cent to dispensing doctors: the £7.55 concession price for pharmacists strongly suggested a supply problem. Four companies increased their offer prices to over £10.00 in March, while other suppliers quoted low prices, which look set to continue into April. The best March offers, below £0.30, were from Cambrian Alliance, B&S, Target, Munro, Eclipse, Crosspharma, DE, Beta and Numark.

Ibandronic acid tabs 150mg x1 was another product where rising prices were sharply accompanied by a pharmacy concession price (£17.53) in March and an increase in the English drug tariff in April. The number of market offer prices above £10.00 grew from three in February to nine in March. The best March offers below £1.00 were from Trident, Lexon, AAH, Munro, Alliance, OTC Direct, Cambrian Alliance and Cavendish.

Like other risers, riluzole tabs 50mg x56 was also granted a pharmacy concessionary price (£17.94) in March, and saw an English drug tariff rise at the beginning of April. The number of offer prices above £100 has grown from none in January, to six in March. The best offers in March below £10.00 were from AAH, Alliance, DE and Beta.