

# Prednisolone price goes through the roof

Trade prices for 28-tablet packs of prednisolone 5mg rocketed skywards again last month. Just a short while ago, the product could be bought by independent pharmacists and dispensing doctors for as little as £0.50 without too much shopping around. But after a 199% average price rise in February, and a 154% increase in March, the average price of the corticosteroid hit £5.47 (US\$8.80). This was about 10-times more than a few weeks earlier (see Figure 3).

Prednisolone 5mg was one of the eight products granted a 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) concession by the Department of Health in March, meaning pharmacists would be reimbursed for dispensing an equivalent product that was more expensive than the product's Drug Tariff reimbursement price. This price has been increased in the new April edition of the Drug Tariff to £1.21, but

as the product's average trade price in March was nearly five-times more, further action by the Department of Health seems inevitable.

Elsewhere, citalopram supplies are returning to normal after some dramatic price increases (**Generics bulletin**, 11 February 2011, page 23). The lowest price reported by WaveData for 28-tablet packs of citalopram 20mg tumbled by 48% in March to £1.80, while the average price dropped by 18% to £4.85 (see Figure 1). Last October, however, the corresponding average price was just £1.29, and bargains could be had for only £0.53 (**Generics bulletin**, 12 November 2010, page 21).

Newcomer venlafaxine is getting cheaper and cheaper as its prices inevitably decline, but not so fast as 10-tablet packs of ciprofloxacin 750mg last month, whose average trade price dropped by 21% to £1.27 (see Figure 2). G

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Ciprofloxacin tabs 750mg 10	£0.50	-11	£1.27	-21
Bendroflumethiazide tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.11	±0	£0.16	-20
Salamol inh. 100µg 1 (200 doses)	£0.95	±0	£1.07	-17
Clomipramine caps 25mg 28	£0.94	-2	£1.17	-15
Atenolol tabs 50mg 28	£0.12	±0	£0.16	-14
Aspirin disp. tabs 75mg 28	£0.12	±0	£0.13	-14

Figure 1 (below): Comparison between the periods 1-28 February 2011 and 1-30 March 2011 of the lowest and average UK trade prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 41 data points. Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (above right): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-28

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Prednisolone tabs 5mg 28	£0.80	+142	£5.47	+154
Mebeverine tabs 135mg 100	£2.92	+22	£6.61	+65
Cetirizine tabs 10mg 30	£0.18	±0	£0.67	+61
Furosemide tabs 40mg 28	£0.10	+11	£0.28	+24
Diclofenac tabs 25mg 84	£0.40	±0	£0.93	+23
Ranitidine tabs 150mg 60	£0.82	+39	£1.22	+22

February 2011 and 1-30 March 2011 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 29 data points (Source - WaveData).

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	£0.41	+17	£0.53	-2
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£0.24	±0	£0.32	-11
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.49	+2	£0.64	+1
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.25	+4	£0.33	-4
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£1.80	-48	£4.85	-18
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£0.94	+19	£1.31	-5
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 30	£1.25	±0	£1.57	-3
Enalapril tabs 20mg 28	£0.25	-4	£0.34	±0
Finasteride tabs 5mg 28	£1.00	+15	£1.32	+10
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	£0.24	±0	£0.47	-4
Fosinopril tabs 20mg 28	£1.47	+4	£1.94	±0
Glimepiride tabs 4mg 30	£0.61	+2	£0.86	-3
Lamotrigine tabs 100mg 56	£2.15	-9	£3.05	-12
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	£0.92	-2	£1.08	-6
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.36	-3	£0.49	-7
Losartan tabs 50mg 28	£0.47	-4	£0.64	-7
Losartan tabs 100mg 28	£0.47	-13	£0.76	-7
Metformin tabs 500mg 84	£0.45	+2	£0.72	-2
Mirtazapine tabs 30mg 28	£0.79	±0	£1.39	+3
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£0.64	-4	£0.85	-6
Ondansetron tabs 4mg 30	£2.95	-2	£4.23	-5
Pantoprazole tabs 20mg 28	£0.40	-2	£0.70	-4
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£0.94	±0	£1.28	+3
Pramipexole tabs 180µg 30	£2.40	+13	£4.99	-11
Pramipexole tabs 700µg 30	£7.45	-16	£18.06	-12

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.30	±0	£1.69	-5
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.57	+6	£0.72	±0
Risedronate tabs 35mg 4	£1.22	+3	£1.97	-18
Risperidone tabs 2mg 60	£0.91	+18	£1.45	+2
Sertraline tabs 100mg 28	£0.84	+12	£12.25	-10
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.22	-4	£0.31	+5
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.39	±0	£0.46	-2
Sumatriptan tabs 50mg 6	£0.70	+1	£0.96	+2
Tamsulosin caps 400µg 30	£0.85	+10	£1.14	+3
Terbinafine tabs 250mg 14	£1.10	+29	£1.39	-2
Topiramate tabs 50mg 60	£1.89	±0	£3.25	±0
Topiramate tabs 100mg 60	£2.67	-8	£4.33	-2
Venlafaxine tabs 37.5mg 56	£1.75	-4	£2.49	-6
Venlafaxine XL caps 75mg 28	£0.49	-11	£1.01	-11
Venlafaxine XL caps 150mg 28	£1.30	-10	£1.89	-17

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