

Prices for pregabalin painkiller plummet

Trade prices of all strengths of pregabalin plummeted in the UK last month as the generic market for the controversial painkiller finally took off. As Figure 3 shows, prices fell on average by about half to about £20 (US\$29) for 84-capsule packs and £15 for 56 capsules, regardless of strength. Lowest prices sank just as quickly to below £10.

Meanwhile, pharmacists continued to be reimbursed for dispensing generics at the trade price of Pfizer's Lyrica at £96.60 for 84 capsules and £64.40 for 56 capsules, again independent of strength. Their profit margin for dispensing 84 capsules of the 25mg strength costing £7.58 would have been a whopping 92%.

Although pregabalin was launched as a generic in February 2015, Justice Richard Arnold ruled that Lyrica's indication for peripheral neuropathic pain should be 'carved out' of generic labels for pregabalin. He also issued an interim injunction in November against Sandoz, preventing the firm from marketing its generic with the full Lyrica

label indications (*Generics bulletin*, 20 November 2015, page 17).

He had ordered England's National Health Service (NHS) in March to issue guidelines demanding that pregabalin prescriptions for the carved out indication be limited to the Lyrica brand name. This had a chilling effect on the market (*Generics bulletin*, 23 October 2015, page 31). It also boosted Lyrica-written prescriptions to £6.8 million in September 2015 from virtually zero before generic launch, and compared with £15.5 million written generically for pregabalin in the same month, according to the latest government figures.

"Competition in the market is driving down pregabalin prices rapidly," commented Charles Joynson, Wavedata's managing director. "There seems now to be lots of availability in the market."

Elsewhere, average prices of recent generics were relatively stable (see Figure 1), while those for pioglitazone were rising rapidly (see Figure 2), prompting the authorities to introduce price concessions. **G**

RECENT LAUNCHES				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Amorolfine lacquer 5% 5ml	£4.19	-10	£6.91	+3
Aripiprazole tabs 10mg 28	£3.60	-15	£10.36	-7
Atorvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.46	-2	£0.81	-8
Candesartan tabs 8mg 28	£0.39	+11	£0.63	-2
Celecoxib caps 200mg 30	£0.75	+10	£1.66	-9
Cilostazol tabs 100mg 56	£2.80	+7	£6.34	-2
Cyclizine tabs 50mg 100	£6.59	±0	£8.63	-5
Desogestrel tabs 75µg 84	£1.29	-4	£2.27	-12
Duloxetine E/C caps 30mg 28	£5.50	-19	£10.92	-9
Entacapone tabs 200mg 30	£4.25	+12	£5.54	+3
Eplerenone tabs 25mg 28	£8.19	-2	£14.46	-5
Escitalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.21	+17	£0.82	+6
Hydroxychloroquine tabs 200mg 60	£2.31	-5	£3.55	-3
Irbesartan tabs 75mg 28	£0.39	-5	£0.68	-3
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£0.45	-4	£1.15	-2
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£1.11	+39	£1.57	-2
Oxcarbazepine tabs 300mg 50	£4.99	+4	£6.70	-3
Rabeprazole tabs 10mg 28	£0.89	-3	£1.58	+5
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£2.99	+7	£4.49	-2
Riluzole tabs 50mg 56	£12.90	-2	£22.93	-4
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£0.82	±0	£2.00	-9
Sevelamer tabs 800mg 180	£85.00	+8	£109.92	+1
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.27	±0	£0.50	-9
Telmisartan tabs 80mg 28	£0.75	-3	£1.45	-8
Tolterodine tabs 2mg 56	£1.30	-8	£2.18	-5

Figure 1 (above): Comparison between the periods 1-30 November and 1-31 December 2015 of UK trade prices of the most recently-launched generics listed in category M of the Drug Tariff of pharmacy-reimbursement prices. Averages calculated from at least 36 data points. Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (centre right): Biggest average trade-price changes between 1-30 November and 1-31 December 2015. Averages calculated from at least 23 data points. Figure 4 (bottom right): Ranking of fastest-moving products subject to the most price offers made to independent UK pharmacists (one strength per ingredient; offers recorded by 31 December). Data for Figures 2, 3 and 4 from a basket of about 750 commonly-dispensed generics. Recently-launched products in Figure 1 excluded from Figures 2 and 3 (Source – WaveData).

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pioglitazone tabs 45mg 28	£0.99	±0	£6.22	+312
Pioglitazone tabs 30mg 28	£0.85	±0	£5.12	+294
Celiprolol tabs 400mg 28	£33.95	+286	£38.88	+262
Pioglitazone tabs 15mg 28	£0.65	±0	£2.49	+142
Rifampicin caps 150mg 100	£16.95	+62	£27.41	+58
Flecainide tabs 50mg 60	£2.55	+4	£5.56	+48

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Pregabalin caps 25mg 84	£7.58	-26	£18.15	-59
Pregabalin caps 100mg 84	£8.49	-55	£21.03	-49
Pregabalin caps 50mg 84	£9.49	-50	£21.28	-49
Pregabalin caps 150mg 56	£7.99	-33	£14.40	-46
Pregabalin caps 200mg 84	£8.49	-55	£23.00	-45
Pregabalin caps 75mg 56	£7.99	-31	£14.85	-44

FAST MOVERS			
Product/Strength/Pack size	Price offers as at 31 December		
	October	November	December
Atorvastatin tabs 10mg 28	110	119	105
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	142	137	102
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	109	114	96
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	126	121	92
Phenytoin tabs 100mg 28	112	103	90
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	106	112	90
Prednisolone tabs 5mg 28	92	107	90
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 28	122	116	88
Alendronate tabs 70mg 4	89	117	88
Sertraline tabs 50mg 28	110	122	87

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