

Pricing turbulence varies across UK drugs


Pharmacy purchase prices for many of the most recently launched generics in the UK showed relative stability in July this year. But that did not preclude both sizeable rises and falls in trade prices for several widely-used molecules. As Figure 1 shows, changes in the average prices for our basket of recent launches were largely in the single digits, although the average cost to pharmacists of 28-count packs of eplerenone 25mg tablets fell by almost a quarter, while the average price of 100 nortriptyline 10mg tablets dipped by around a sixth. More typical for pricing trends among recent launches, however, were packs of four tadalafil 10mg tablets, with no change in the lowest offer available in the market at £1.10 (US\$1.44) and just a 2% slide in the average price to £1.67.

But a glance at the biggest risers in Figure 2 shows the difficulty of predicting UK price fluctuations even for the same molecule. Whereas

tadalafil 10mg prices were almost stable during July, the average price for 28-count packs of the 2.5mg strength more than trebled to £24.56.

Such pricing turbulence was reflected in part by the price concessions granted by the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) towards the end of last month. While propranolol – which saw average prices as much as quadruple during July – was not included in the DHSC’s list of concessions, latanoprost 0.005% drops’ average rise of 285% to £9.43 resulted in a £11.53 concession.

Not all concessions fully covered pharmacists’ costs. While average prices for 56-count packs of oxybutynin 2.5mg and 5mg tablets roughly halved to £2.41 and £4.11 respectively (see Figure 3), the concession prices of £2.23 and £3.88 were inadequate.

The total number of price offers recorded by WaveData fell in July, with most activity centred on proton-pump inhibitors (see Figure 4). 

RECENT LAUNCHES				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Aripiprazole tabs 10mg 28	£1.02	+3	£2.40	+1
Carbimazole tabs 5mg 100	£25.00	±0	£30.32	-5
Celecoxib caps 200mg 30	£0.75	±0	£1.21	-1
Cilostazol tabs 100mg 56	£3.33	+5	£4.14	+8
Duloxetine caps 30mg 28	£1.19	±0	£2.76	-5
Eplerenone tabs 25mg 28	£3.27	-9	£6.46	-24
Escitalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.45	±0	£0.76	-5
Etoricoxib tabs 90mg 28	£2.11	±0	£3.37	+2
Frovatriptan tabs 2.5mg 6	£2.85	±0	£5.79	+3
Memantine tabs 10mg 28	£0.55	±0	£0.79	-6
Montelukast tabs 10mg 28	£0.57	±0	£0.86	+1
Nefopam tabs 30mg 90	£5.99	-1	£11.47	-9
Nortriptyline tabs 10mg 100	£1.20	-11	£6.23	-17
Olmesartan tabs 10mg 28	£0.75	-5	£1.34	+2
Pregabalin caps 150mg 56	£2.15	-4	£3.97	-7
Raloxifene tabs 60mg 28	£2.29	+1	£2.97	-1
Rasagiline tabs 1mg 28	£1.15	+11	£2.46	-14
Rizatriptan tabs 10mg 3	£4.75	-4	£6.85	-4
Rosuvastatin tabs 5mg 28	£0.77	-3	£1.36	-15
Sevelamer tabs 800mg 180	£21.99	±0	£26.37	+1
Sildenafil tabs 100mg 4	£0.23	-4	£0.42	-2
Tadalafil tabs 10mg 4	£1.10	±0	£1.67	-2
Telmisartan tabs 80mg 28	£0.81	-5	£1.20	-2
Travoprost drops 40µg/ml 2.5ml	£2.73	-2	£4.86	-10
Zonisamide caps 100mg 56	£3.59	+3	£7.33	+1

Figure 1 (above): Comparison between the periods 1-30 June 2018 and 1-31 July 2018 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 21 data points. Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (centre right): Biggest average trade-price changes between 1-30 June 2018 and 1-31 July 2018. Averages calculated from at least 14 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 30 June). 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 (%)
Propranolol tabs 40mg 28	£0.36	+13	£2.24	+300
Latanoprost drops 0.005% 2.5ml	£1.53	+40	£9.43	+285
Propranolol tabs 10mg 28	£0.36	+9	£2.07	+245
Tadalafil tabs 2.5mg 28	£5.50	+10	£24.56	+212
Risperidone tabs 0.5mg 20	£0.26	+44	£0.73	+143
Famciclovir tabs 250mg 21	£8.98	+11	£81.94	+133

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Oxybutynin tabs 2.5mg 56	£1.90	+6	£2.41	-59
Oxybutynin tabs 2.5mg 84	£2.05	-21	£3.36	-57
Oxybutynin tabs 5mg 84	£1.23	-66	£4.14	-51
Pioglitazone tabs 30mg 28	£2.07	-29	£4.73	-45
Oxybutynin tabs 5mg 56	£1.99	-15	£4.11	-40
Quetiapine tabs 25mg 60	£1.25	-4	£2.40	-40

FAST MOVERS			
Product/Strength/Pack size	Price offers as at 30 June 2018		
	May	June	July
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	128	128	115
Atorvastatin tabs 20mg 28	120	145	109
Lansoprazole caps 30mg 28	114	121	102
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	123	132	99
Bisoprolol fumarate tabs 2.5mg 28	95	106	96
Fluoxetine caps 20mg 30	100	121	94
Metformin tabs 500mg 28	81	90	90
Amitriptyline tabs 10mg 28	106	113	90
Clopidogrel tabs 75mg 28	95	91	88
Levothyroxine tabs 100µg 28	102	96	86

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