



October 2013

As readers are aware, October sees the annual adjustment of Category M prices to keep community pharmacy retained purchase profits capped at £500M. As in previous years, there is a net reduction in community pharmacy remuneration and so Category M prices have been reduced in order to reduce purchase profits by £80M per year [<http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/20130917-NHS-England-letter-medicine-margin-October-2013-adjustment-FINAL.pdf>]. Therefore, for this quarter, price decreases far outnumber the increases.

In the usual BNF Chapter order, here are what I consider to be the significant changes.

Gastro-intestinal system (BNF Chapter 1)

All PPIs are down in price and in straight alphabetical order, new prices with percentage decreases are: esomeprazole 20mg tablets 5.31 (-14%), 40mg tablets 6.58 (-17%), esomeprazole 20mg capsules 6.18 (-37%, Category C based on *Emozul*), esomeprazole 40mg capsules 7.93 (-39%, similar Category change as 20mg), lansoprazole 15mg capsules 1.209 (-7%), 30 mg capsules 1.64 (-7%), omeprazole 20mg capsules 1.25 (-7%), 40mg capsules 1.20 (-8%), 20mg tablets 5.66 (-10%), 40mg tablets 2.35 (-18%), pantoprazole 20mg tablets 1.18 (-5%), 40mg tablets 1.56 (-4%) rabeprazole 10mg tablets 2.62 (-13%) and rabeprazole 20mg tablets 3.08 (-28%). Ranitidine tablets are little changed with the exception of 150mg tablets which have risen 34% to 1.85 . For reference, the 300mg tablets are down 4% to 1.55 . The 75mg/5ml oral solution has dropped 10% to 7.61 . After last quarter's doubling in price, senna 7.5mg tablets have dropped 16% to 10.11 . For the interest of those familiar with NP8 (the rather unoriginal abbreviation for non-Part VIII or not in Part VIII [8] lines), lansoprazole 30mg orodispersible tablets are now listed at 5.45 for 28.

Cardiovascular system (BNF Chapter 2)

Bendroflumethiazide 2.5mg and 5mg tablets are both down by between 4 and 5% so 2.5mg now 82p and 5mg now 87p. Furosemide 40mg tablets have dropped 8% to 82p and bumetanide 1mg tablets are down 3% to 1.16 . One other diuretic to mention: indapamide 2.5mg tablets have more than tripled from 4.10 to 13.98 . While atenolol is down about 5% so 50mg now 84p and 100mg now 89p, bisoprolol is down slightly more so 5mg tablets are 97p and 10mg are 1.06 . There's a similar story for carvedilol with 12.5mg tablets

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falling 8% to 1.29 and 25mg tablets falling 11% to 1.41 . Amlodipine 5mg tablets are down 5% to 97p and 10mg are down by a similar amount to 1.04. Isosorbide mononitrate gets this quarter's "prize" for highest riser: 10mg almost double to 5.34 but 20mg up by a massive 7-fold to 14.53. Dinitrate tablets [Category A] are also around the £13 mark for a 56 pack. Glyceril trinitrate 500mcg tablets fall 9% to 2.02 . Doxazosin 4mg tablets are down 7% to 1.14 . Running through ACE inhibitors in alphabetical order gives the following new prices: enalapril 10mg 1.06 (-2%), 20mg 1.12 (-3%), lisinopril 10mg 1.07 (up 5%), 20mg 1.15, perindopril 4mg 1.55 (-10%), 8mg 1.64 (-11%), ramipril 5mg capsules 1.20 (-9%), 10mg capsules 1.28 (also -9%), 5mg tablets 1.29 (-12%) and 10mg tablets 1.55 (-5%). The strange goings on with fosinopril are back: 10mg are down 5% to 1.35 but the 20s more than double in price to 5.93 . Angiotensin II antagonists and candesartan is down by significant percentages so new prices are 4mg (7 pack only!) 92p (-15%), 8mg 1.84 (-20%), 16mg 2.22 (-22%) and 32mg 3.05 (-21%). Irbesartan is also down by double figure percentages, although not as great as candesartan: 75mg tablets 1.58 (-15%), 150mg tablets 1.80 (-14%), and 300mg 2.43 (-12%). Losartan is mainly down: 50mg tablets by 8% to 1.23, 100mg tablets by 13% to 1.40, the 50/12.5 tablets by 9% to 1.70 and 100/25 tablets drop 7% to 2.11. On the contrary, the 100/12.5 combination is up a few pennies to 15.94 . Final AT-II antagonist valsartan is almost all down and prices for the higher strengths are 80mg 2.01 (-9%), 160mg 2.55 (-12%), and the 160/12.5 combination 2.69 (-25%) but the 160/25 combination is much more expensive at 15.98 even after a 13% reduction. Antiplatelets and aspirin 75mg dispersible fall by the general amount this quarter of 5% to 80p and clopidogrel 75mg is down by 7% to 1.71 .Statins in alphabetical order give atorvastatin 10mg at 1.17 (-9%), 20mg 1.47 (-8%), 40mg 1.69 (-11%), 80mg 2.94 (-6%), pravastatin 40mg 1.78 (-9%), simvastatin 20mg 95p (-2%), 40mg 1.16 (-6%) and 80mg 1.98 (-4%). Another footnote for this chapter are some lines with prices that stand out e.g. ciprofibrate 100mg tablets are 64.90 and nebivolol 2.5mg tablets are 68.12, yet 5mg are just 1.88 (all 28 packs).

Respiratory system (BNF Chapter 3)

Montelukast falls some more so new prices are [all sugar-free]: 4mg chewable tablets 2.35 (-22%), 4mg granules sachets 3.88 (-8%), 5mg chewable tablets 2.66 (-16%) and 10mg chewable tablets 2.66 (-16%). Non-sedating antihistamines and cetirizine 10mg tablets are down 8% to 1.04, desloratadine 5mg is down 22% to 2.04 and loratadine 10mg is down 6% to 1.05 . Salbutamol 2mg and 4mg tablets continue to rise and now breach the £2 per tablet mark: 28x2mg tablets now 56.40 and 28x4mg tablets now 57.64 .

Central nervous system (BNF Chapter 4)

As it's such an expensive hypnotic now, I should mention temazepam - and 10mg tablets have gone up a further 2% to 27.60 but the 20mg tablets have come down 7% to 24.39 . The oral solution seems fairly stable at 55.93 per 300ml. Antipsychotics and olanzapine falls by more than average so 10, 15 and 20mg tablets are now 1.59 (-15%), 1.98 (-28%) and 2.32 (-26%).

Orodispersible sugar-free versions [Category A] have also reduced but prices for the same 3 strengths are 17.39, 25.52 and 34.24 . Quetiapine is again substantially down and the new prices for 25, 100, 200 and 300mg are 1.76 (-12%), 2.88 (-25%), 3.74 (-20%) and 5.19 (-20%). Plain risperidone tablets are down with new prices for 2,3 and 4mg being 1.50 (-4%), 2.07 (-4%) and 2.18 (-6%). Category A orodispersible versions remain over 15 times more expensive. Antidepressants and citalopram 20mg is down 8% to 95p and 40mg is down 4% to 1.09. Fluoxetine 20mg is down 5% to 1.02 and 60mg is down 16% to 36.24 . After last quarter's steep increases, sertraline 50mg falls just 3% to 6.35 while 100mg remains at 7.71 . Mirtazapine 30mg has risen 6% to 1.97 and 45mg has fallen 1% to 2.64. Orodispersible equivalents are 1.73 (-6%) and 2.37 (+4%) . Anti-epileptics and lamotrigine 100mg is down 18% to 2.13 and 200mg is down 14% to 3.83 . Contrary to last quarter's suggestion, levetiracetam hasn't found its floor as 500mg falls 30% to 2.95 and 750mg falls 32% to 4.22! Topiramate moves around: 25mg capsules are down 14% to 15.63, 25mg tablets are up 25% to £3, 50mg capsules are up 1% to 40.42, 50mg tablets are down 10% to 2.47, 100mg tablets are down 8% to 2.92 and 200mg tablets are up slightly to £15. In an almost complete turnaround to last quarter, gabapentin is all down so 300mg capsules now 3.15 (-11%), 400mg capsules 4.02 (-11%), 600mg tablets 9.60 (-17%) and 800mg tablets 35.53 (barely changed). Analgesics. Paracetamol tablets are down 6% to 88p (32 pack) with capsules down another 5% to 1.23 . Co-codamol is mainly down by between 5 and 7% [e.g. a 30 pack of 8/500 tablets: 1.05, same size pack of 30/500 tablets: 1.37, 32x8/500 effervescent tablets 2.46, 32x30/500 effervescent tablets 2.73] but the 8/500 capsules are up by a quarter to 1.87 per 32. 5HT-1 agonists and the 6 pack of naratriptan is down 19% to 1.99 although sumatriptan 50mg tablets are up 3% to 1.67 yet 100mg tablets are down 5% to £2. Zolmitriptan plain 2.5mg is down 24% to 1.52, dispersible 2.5mg is down 20% to 1.82 and 5mg dispersibles are down just 2% to 13.58 . Entacapone 200mg is down 27% 6.62 . Anticholinesterases. Donepezil is mainly down: Plain 5mg down 9% to 1.29, orodispersible up 1% to 13.90, plain 10mg down 10% to 1.56 and orodispersible down 5% to 18.72 . This quarter, certain strengths of rivastigmine have move from Category A to M with typical substantial price reductions. This applies to 1.5mg and 3mg capsules now 5.99 (28 pack, -73%) and 6.12 (-68%) respectively, but 4.5mg remain Category A at 18.83 (-5%) and 6mg capsules at 17.71 (-1%). Orlistat has fallen 15% to 31.18 A 10 pack of ondansetron 4mg tablets has entered Category M with a 95% price reduction to 1.79 .

Infections (BNF Chapter 5)

The changes for the most commonly used lines are.... 21 amoxicillin 250mg capsules fall 11% to 1.43 and the same number of 500mg capsules drop 12% to 1.61 . Co-amoxiclav 250/125 tablets fall 5% to 2.27 . 28 erythromycin 250mg tablets fall 8% to 1.83 while the capsules fall just 2% to 23.70 . Clarithromycin 250mg tablets fall 4% to 1.89 and 500mg tablets fall 15% to 2.82 . Oxytetracycline 250mg drop 8% to 1.23 and tetracycline 250mg tablets fall 15% to 3.47 . Trimethoprim 200mg tablets fall 6% to 98p (14 pack; 6 pack

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priced pro-rata). Antivirals and plain aciclovir 800mg are down 8% to 4.76 while the dispersible version is up a penny at 8.76 . 400mg aciclovir [56 pack] is noticeable by falling 33% to 4.39 . Famciclovir remains in Category A and actually rises just over 1% to 189.04 for 7 but valaciclovir enters Category M with a 61% price decrease to 6.63 for 10. The 14 pack of terbinafine 250mg tablets is down 11% to 1.70 .

Endocrine system (BNF Chapter 6)

After recent increases, the 28 pack of metformin 500mg falls 4% to 86p with 850mg falling 5% to 1.19 . Gliclazide 80mg is down 6% to 1.02 and although 2mg glimepiride has fallen 11% to 1.10, the [Category M] 4mg strength has gone up a penny to 1.40. Category A 3mg is up 1% to 5.68 . Again, pioglitazone drops by substantial percentages: 15,30 and 45mg now 1.64 (-23%), 2.04 (-26%) and 2.40 (-28%). Levothyroxine tablets are little changed: both 50mcg and 100mcg tablets each fall about 2% to leave both strengths the same price at 1.85 . Bisphosphonates and both strengths of alendronic acid are down about 5% so 70mg now 88p and 10mg now 1.37 . Risedronate 35mg tablets have fallen 3% to 1.17 and a single ibandronic acid 150mg tablet has fallen 45% to 3.63. The 28 pack of 50mg tablets falls 35% to 14.76 . Enteric coated prednisolone 5mg tablets drop 23% to 2.41 but remain more than twice as expensive as the plain which drops just 2% to 1.03 . Finasteride 5mg tablets are down 6% to 1.56 .

Odds n' ends (BNF chapters 7-13)

Chapter 7

Tamsulosin 400mcg capsules are up 3p to 5.56 . Oxybutinin 2.5mg and 5mg tablets have both fallen 7% to 1.96 and 3.10 respectively. Another line where I have wrongly called the "floor", tolterodine falls by around a quarter: 1mg actually by 28% to 3.09 and 2mg by 25% to 3.36 . Of course, this quarter's biggest reduction goes to sildenafil where all strengths have fallen by over 90% on entry into Category M so new prices are 1.31, 1.45 and 1.55 for 4 tablets of 25,50 and 100mg.

Chapter 8

Anastrozole 1mg tablets have reversed last quarter's move by dropping 3% to 1.95 . Exemestane 25mg tablets are down 30% to 5.36, letrozole 2.5mg tablets are down 16% to 1.63 and tamoxifen 20mg tablets are down 4% to 2.41 . Bicalutamide 50mg is down 7% to 2.36 and 150mg is down 12% to 5.95 . In contrast to almost all other Category M lines, mycophenolate mofetil 500mg tablets rise 18% to 12.31 for 50.

Chapter 9

Never mentioned until now, I think it worth saying that all strengths of alfacalcidol capsules are now in Category M and prices for 30 packs of 250ng, 500ng and 1mg are 2.94, 6.24 and 6.77 .

Chapter 10

NSAIDs: Ibuprofen 400mg is down 10% to 3.22 for 84 and Category A 600mg are up just 2p to 6.89 . The 28 pack of diclofenac 50mg tablets falls 8% to 85p and 28 naproxen 500mg tablets are down 11% to 1.65 . A quick note of a big riser is that 56 nabumetone 500mg tablets have more than doubled to 8.92 . Leflunomide has fallen significantly: 10mg tablets by 25% to 18.99 and 20mg tablets by 22% to 21.47 . Ibuprofen 5% gel is up 1% to 4.22 per 100g but being Category A, this price changes monthly. Category C 10% gel remains at 5.79 for 100g, ketoprofen 2.5% gel is down 3% to 3.74 per 100g and piroxicam 0.5% gel is down 6% to 4.67 for 112g.

Chapter 11

Hypromellose 0.3% eye drops are down 9% to 1.07. Dorzolamide 2% eye drops are down 9% to 2.41 but the combination with timolol rises 1% to 3.54 . Latanoprost 2.5% eye drops are down again, dropping 11% to 1.97 while its combination with timolol is down 15% to 5.19 . Plain timolol 0.25% drops are down 6% to 1.38 and 0.5% is down 8% to 1.35 . Sodium cromoglicate eye drops are down 12% to 1.54 .

Chapter 12

The usual two lines: beclometasone nasal spray is down 9% to 2.12 while Category A budesonide nasal spray remains at 3.85.

Chapter 13

Co-cyprindiol is up just over 1% to 5.23, continuing its upward movement. Aqueous cream is down 9%, falling to 1.01 per 100g. Hydrocortisone 1%

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cream is down 5% to 1.13 per 15g and 1% ointment is down 16% to 1.14 per 15g. 2.5% cream is up another 2% to 22.40 and 2.5% ointment is up 1% to 22.68 . Category M mometasone 0.1% cream is 4.34 per 30g, a price rise of 15% for the larger size being required to making the prices pro-rata on entry into this Category while the ointment is down 16% to 3.79 per 30g. Aciclovir 5% cream is down 17% to 1.07 per 2g and terbinafine 1% cream is up 14% to 2.06 per 15g.