

# COMPARISON OF PRICING OF MEDICINES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Swetha Gopalakrishnan , Janis Vella Szijj , Anthony Serracino Inglott

Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

email:swetha.gopalakrishnan.23@um.edu.mt

## INTRODUCTION

Cost of medications can impact availability and the general health of the population. Discrepancies in medication prices between nations can also raise concerns about affordability, equity, and accessibility of medication.

## AIMS

To identify and compare the cost of antibiotics and antidiabetic drugs available in Malta with those available in four other countries.

## METHOD

- Antibiotic and antidiabetic classes of medication were selected.
- Countries included in the comparative study were Malta, Greece, Slovenia, United Kingdom and India. Retail unit pricing of medications was compared according to active ingredient and rounded up to two significant values.
- For each country, the least expensive retail product with the same active ingredient, dosage form, and potency were compared. Medicinal product prices were converted to euro and analyzed per unit dosage form. For each medication, the price range, average, and standard deviation between countries were computed.

## RESULTS

- Comparison of unit dose prices of the selected medicines were analysed using Microsoft excel 2016 and by plotting corresponding bar graphs for each medicine in five countries.
- Malta recorded the highest retail price per unit dosage form for six antibacterial medications and nine diabetes medications included in the study.

Table:1 Examples of identified medicines with highest & lowest price for unit dosage form

	DRUG	HIGHEST PRICE PER UNIT DOSE IN EURO(€)	LOWEST PRICE PER UNIT DOSE IN EURO(€)	MEDIAN PRICE (€)*
ANTI-DIABETICS	VILDAGLIPTIN	MALTA (€1.06 )	INDIA (€0.11)	€0.60
	SITAGLIPTIN	MALTA (€2.05)	SLOVENIA(€0.33)	€1.04
	EMPAGLIFLOZIN	MALTA (€1.90)	INDIA (€0.68)	€1.37
ANTIBIOTICS	CLARITHROMYCIN	MALTA (€1.13)	INDIA (€0.20)	€0.57
	AZITHROMYCIN	MALTA (€3.59)	INDIA (€0.22)	€1.89
	LEVOFLOXACIN	UK (€3.02)	INDIA (€0.10)	€1.13
	FOSFOMYCIN	MALTA (€10)	INDIA (€5.03)	€6.20

\* Median price in Malta,Slovenia,India,Greece and UK

## CONCLUSION

Factors such as market size, regulatory frameworks, national policies, and socioeconomic conditions significantly influence medication costs, leading to substantial price disparities. These differences pose challenges to ensuring equitable access to affordable medications, particularly in smaller and developing nations.

Despite various price-control measures, achieving consistent and fair drug pricing remains a contentious issue that requires ongoing attention and coordinated global efforts to address.

## REFERENCE

Chalkidou, K, Silverman R, Madan Keller J, Glassman A. Tackling the Triple Transition in Global Health Procurement.2019. (Cited 2020, Aug.7)  
Available from: <https://www.cgdev.org/better-health-procurement>