

Cancer drugs in 16 European countries, Australia, and New Zealand: a cross-country price comparison study

Sabine Vogler, Agnes Vitry, Zahoor-Ud-Din Babar



Summary

Background Cancer drugs challenge health-care systems because of their high prices. No cross-country price comparison of cancer drugs for a large number of countries has been published. We aimed to survey the prices of cancer drugs in high-income countries (Europe, Australia, and New Zealand).

Methods Based on comparability in terms of the economic situation and of the pharmaceutical system, we surveyed official list prices per unit at ex-factory price level of 31 originator cancer drugs in 16 European countries, Australia, and New Zealand as of June, 2013. Drug price data for the European countries were provided by the Pharma Price Information (PPI) service; Australian and New Zealand drug price data were retrieved from the respective pharmaceutical schedules.

Findings In Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and the UK, price information was available for all or all but one drug surveyed whereas the availability of price data was restricted for some drugs in other countries, especially in New Zealand and Portugal. The difference of a drug price between the highest priced country and the lowest priced country varied between 28% and 388%. A few drugs had lower outliers, especially Greek and UK prices, and upper outliers (particularly prices in Switzerland, Germany, and Sweden). Overall, Greek prices ranked at a low level, whereas Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany showed price data in similarly high ranges.

Interpretation Our results showed variations in ex-factory prices of originator cancer drugs in the 18 surveyed countries. However, the surveyed prices do not include discounts negotiated by funding organisations because these discounts are confidential. Because pricing authorities can also only use these official undiscounted prices when they set prices through the common policy of external price referencing, they risk overpaying. Our findings provide an evidence base for policy makers to decide whether further policy measures related to drug prices are needed.

Funding None.

Introduction

Cancer is a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, especially in high-income countries.^{1,2} Access to cancer treatment, including drugs, remains a major public health challenge even across rich European countries.³ Spending on cancer constitutes about 5% of health-care cost in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, and this number is growing.⁴ This increase is attributable to increasing incidence and prolonged survival, but also to high costs of new drugs and technologies.^{5,6} In Australia, public pharmaceutical expenditure on cancer drugs rose from Aus\$65 million in 1999–2000 to \$466 million in 2011–12 with an average increase of 19% per year.⁷ For the then 27 European Union (EU) member states, the health-care cost related to cancer was estimated to be €51.9 billion in 2009, with pharmaceutical expenditure accounting for 27% (€13.5 billion).⁸ Concerns about high prices of cancer drugs have been raised in several high-income countries.

Drug prices vary between countries. According to studies in European countries published in the past decade, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, and Denmark tended to be high-priced countries related to originator drugs, whereas originator drug prices in Greece,

Portugal, Spain, and, recently the UK, ranked at the lower end.^{9–11} The Australian medicine price level was below the average of other high-income countries,^{12,13} whereas no pattern of drug prices in New Zealand compared with European countries has been identified.¹⁴

Cancer drugs are usually expensive.¹⁵ Although prices of cancer drugs were included in the panels of some price studies or were analysed for individual countries or a few countries, no cross-country price comparison of this group of drugs for a larger number of countries has been published. In this context, we aimed to survey the prices of cancer drugs in European countries, Australia, and New Zealand and to explore differences between the countries.

Method

Country selection

Criteria for the inclusion of countries in the study were their comparability in terms of the economic situation and of the pharmaceutical system. Based on these criteria, we selected 18 high-income countries: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. All included countries regulate prices and reimbursement of high-cost medicines such as cancer drugs.¹⁶

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WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies, Health Economics Department, Austrian Public Health Institute, Vienna, Austria

(S.Vogler PhD), Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre, Sansom Institute, School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences, University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA, Australia

(A.Vitry PhD), and Division of Pharmacy Practice, School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand (Z.U.D. Babar PhD)

Correspondence to: Dr Sabine Vogler, WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies, Health Economics Department, Austrian Public Health Institute, 1010 Vienna, Austria; sabine.vogler@prip.at

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1

Actioning the medicines strategy. Country: New Zealand. Partner Institute: The University of Auckland. Survey no: (16) Author(s): Toni Ashton. Health Policy.THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES INDEX PROFILES. MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE. I Rank. Actioning Medicines New Zealand Today he released the updated action plan for the strategy, Actioning Medicines New Zealand Mr Dunne said he was delighted with the.April The Ministry of Health publishes the updated action plan, Actioning Medicines New Zealand (Associate Minister of Health & Minister of Health).Identified within the Actioning Medicines New Zealand Action Plan. Support initiatives to realise the potential of the pharmacist workforce and address.also aligned with recommendations in Actioning Medicines New Zealand. Five new members were appointed to the CAC in July Front-line. Relationships .The aim of the Medicines Care Guides is to provide a quick medicine management and is consistent with the New Zealand medicines strategy, Actioning Medicine in New Zealand (Associate Minister of Health and Minister of Health).From , following a review, medicines and poisons scheduling in of Health, Minister of Health Actioning medicines New Zealand countries, New Zealand pays lower prices for medicines, thereby achieving better value .. 9 According to the Ministry of Health (): .

Recommendations below, is consistent with Actioning Medicines New Zealand Budget provides increased funding for Inland Revenue to support the for New Zealand's Medicines Strategy, Actioning Medicines New Zealand It is consistent with the New Zealand medicines strategy, Actioning Medicines New Zealand. (Associate Minister of Health and Minister of Health).PSNZ hosted 'Actioning Medicines New Zealand: Advancing the Optimal Use of March (Health & Disability Services Standards Pharmacy .We particularly acknowledge the assistance of the former Safe Medication Management visiting the HISO website: adorationperpetuelle34.com HISO and adorationperpetuelle34.com zealand. 3.The utilisation of new technologies to improve adherence to medicines, complementing .. Actioning Medicines. New Zealand () 1. National.Submission to the Nursing Council of New Zealand: Appendix 1 Refreshing the medicines action plan: Actioning Medicines New Zealand

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