

12040 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

On the other hand, there were a number of instances where savings were negligible or increased costs occurred. The major cost increase occurred with diuretics where the actual costs were one percent higher than expected. Part of these cost increases may have been caused by pharmacists shifting to the drug product at the price specified in the RCLP.

Another factor could have been a change in prescription size. Reducing the size of the prescription would have increased the cost of prescriptions for a given volume of products. Examination of the increases and decreases failed to uncover any consistent pattern in one way or the other. Overall, the average prescription size for all RCLP products was 93.7 items per prescription for the pre-RCLP base period and 92.6 for the test period. The pre-RCLP period utilized 587,386 prescriptions and the test period 637,830. The difference in this latter pair of numbers was not judged as being a significant factor in this study. However, the reduction in the average prescription size could be significant because it represents a 1.2% reduction in quantity which in and of itself could represent a major portion of the 2.5% savings shown.