

The Truth About Generic Drugs

By Larry Gallone

Generic drugs have been around for a long time, but it is only until recently they have taken on a greater importance. The first question we ask is what are generic drugs? They are drugs (Hydrochlorothiazide, for example, a type of water pill) which are manufactured by a company (Zenith), other than the original manufacturer (Merck, Sharp and Dohme). The ingredients are the same, all the chemical equations are balanced and physically they are as effective as the brand name drug. But the patent to manufacture the brand name drug has run out and other companies are capitalizing on this situation.

Generic drugs take on importance for they can be sold at a lesser price than the brand name drug. The one major factor stifling some generic drug sales are the patients themselves. Most people have been trained to believe that the less you pay for the drug, the worse off you are, and the lower the quality of the product. This is not the case with generic drugs, the two drugs in question are equal in every way except one, price.

Currently 31 states have laws concerning generic drugs which vary from state to state. In Pennsylvania, the doctor has two places to sign his prescription pad. If he signs in one spot, then when the patient takes the prescription to his friendly neighborhood pharmacist he has the option of substituting a generic drug. However, if the doctor signs on the other side then the pharmacist cannot substitute the drug.

Role of the Advisor

by Michael O'Toole

Advisors — who and what are they? To some they are troublesome and difficult to get hold of — to others they are a great deal of help. This was shown to be true during the week when students pre-registered for the Winter Term and flocked to their advisors to help in selecting courses.

When talking to the advisors about preregistration and how they are helpful to the students, I learned that basically they show students what is required. Also, they find out what the student would like to take; then the advisors will begin to work from there. Advisors will try to work classes around for students who work, so job and school do not conflict. Some advisors will take students not assigned to them because the student's original advisor was not available. Students coming to advisors for advice fall into two types — the "well prepared student" and the "not so well prepared student."

There is another type of advisor on campus not dealing with academic studies — "Career Advisors." They assist students in exploring life and career plans. A career advisor said that students are coming in with a misconception — that the major they pick they have to stay with. However, this is not true, for 50% of Penn State students change their majors from one to six times while in college.

To help make decisions as choosing majors, career advisors supply information concerning jobs and careers. For example, advisors give information in certain fields as to salaries, the demands of a particular job, the percent employed and unemployed, and students who have graduated and are working in their field. This helps give students ideas about a particular major and job possibilities. The career advisors work through "The Career Development and Placement Center." The center's primary purpose is to help students make the most of college, helping them to choose the appropriate major and preparing students to enter into the employment field.

The potential for generic drugs is unbounded. There is an expanding market where generic pharmaceutical corporations are making moves to unseed the established companies. (On generic prescriptions a person can save up to 50%.)

A generic drug can be manufactured after a patent runs out for a certain company on that specific drug. (Obviously the patents haven't run out for every drug so not every drug has a generic.) The time for a patent now stands at 17 years. This includes research, development, and marketing. Some companies have expressed a type of resistance to the generic industry. One way the major companies are fighting the generic companies is to buy out the drug that is giving them competition. Another last ditch effort by the companies is a threat to stop pouring money, time and effort into development of new drugs. However, by doing this they would be cutting their own throats because generic drugs would continue to develop and standing drug companies would be left with exorbitant prices and an overdose of unmarketable drugs.

The best way to look at the potential of generic drugs is to take a case. Chlortrimeton 12 mg. (used mainly for sinus problems) is the brand name of a drug which sells for 8c per capsule. Chlorpheniramine Maleate 12 mg. using the chemical name sells for 1.5c a tablet.

An interesting observation surfaces. Why doesn't the original manufacturer lower its prices to be competitive with the generic ones? It seems logical enough to assume the profits made by the major company in marketing and sales have exceeded, many times over, what it originally spent. The drug has literally paid for itself. Lets take another rare situation where the above has happened. Tylenol the aspirin substitute, now has a generic counterpart. The manufacturers of Tylenol lowered their price as not to lose the profits of Tylenol sales. If one company can do it, why not all?

Ron Rose, general manager of Al Rose Apothecary, Inc., told us that since the arrival of generic drugs, original drug companies have instituted deals to the pharmacies they never had done in the past. "More and more people are asking for generic drugs. Let's face it, would you rather spend \$10.00 for a prescription with a name brand drug or \$5.00 for a generic name? The one thing that most people don't understand is they (the name brand and the generic) are the same drug. Most of our patients opposition is psychological. Physically, generics will have the same effect as name brands." In New Jersey, where Ron works, patients can walk into a pharmacy and ask for the generic drug, they do not need special dispensation from the doctor as they do in Pennsylvania.

Most pharmacists make good use of generic drugs and like the idea of using

them. When asked how they can sell for such a low price Ron Rose said, "For the generic companies to put out a drug and sell it for the same price as the original would not be economically feasible. Instead they sell them at a lower price and depend on the number of pills sold. They have to sell in quantity to make their money."

Generic drugs are finally making a breakthrough people can benefit from. Medical expenses border on the ridiculous and generic drugs are now beginning to bring them back to some sort of normality. Most pharmacies are switching more and more to generic drugs and from what Ron has seen the generic drug market seems to be getting larger every day. That's a shot in the arm we all could use.

**Lima
Pharmacy**

For a Complete Line of
Pharmaceutical Supplies

Only 1/2 Mile From Campus
1216 Baltimore Pike
Lima, Pa. LO 6-8778



feelin' GOOD ABOUT SERVING YOU!

BEFORE OR AFTER CLASS

COME AND 'FEEL GOOD' AT *Gino's*

**GIANT, SIRLOINER &
KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN**

JUST A FEW MINUTES FROM CAMPUS

BALTIMORE PIKE, LIMA
(In Front of the Granite Run Mall)

PAT FLANAGAN Manager

