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INTRODUCTION

International price comparisons may be used to evaluate affordability and accessibility of medicines in specific countries.¹

Comparisons of prices of medicines can help identify factors determining availability of medicines on the market in different countries.

AIMS

To compare prices of generic medicines used in cardiovascular and respiratory disease available for retail in community pharmacies in Malta with other European countries that have comparable pharmaceutical policies and accessible retail prices of medicines.

METHOD

The prices of medicines in five countries were compared.

Countries included in the study were Malta, Greece, Macedonia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

Twenty-seven generic medicines were included in the study (cardiovascular disease, n=18 and respiratory disease, n=9).

Medicine prices were converted to Euro and analyzed per unit dosage form.

Descriptive statistical analyses were performed for the whole dataset and sub-groups of medicines.

RESULTS

The results show that Malta had the highest retail price per dosage unit for thirteen of the medicines indicated for cardiovascular disease (Table 1), and for eight of the medicines indicated for respiratory disease (Table 2).

Prices of medicines ranged from €0.17 to €1.27 per dosage unit for cardiovascular disease (Table 1) and €0.01 to €0.92 per dosage unit for respiratory disease (Table 2).

Highest cross country difference in unit price for the sub-group of medicines indicated for cardiovascular disease was for rivaroxaban 10 mg tablet, simvastatin 10 mg tablet and clopidogrel 75 mg tablet with standard deviation of 0.49, 0.46 and 0.42 from the average retail price respectively (Figure 1).

Highest cross country difference in unit price for the sub-group of medicines indicated for respiratory disease was for fluticasone furoate- vilanterol 92 µg/22 µg powder for inhalation and montelukast 10 mg tablet with standard deviation of 0.39 and 0.32 from the average retail price respectively (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Comparison of prices of medicines indicated for cardiovascular disease n=3

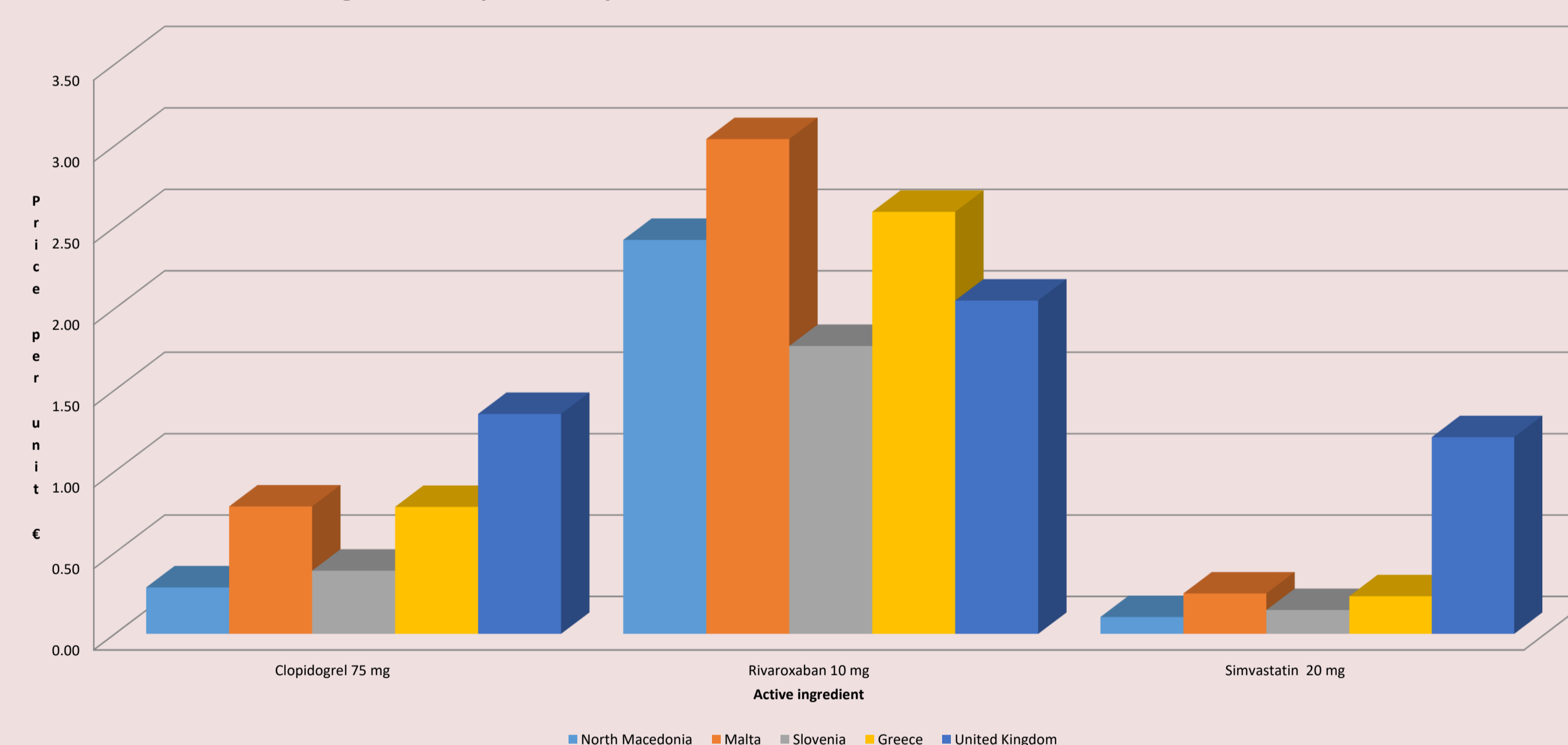


Figure 2: Comparison of prices of medicines indicated for respiratory disease n=2

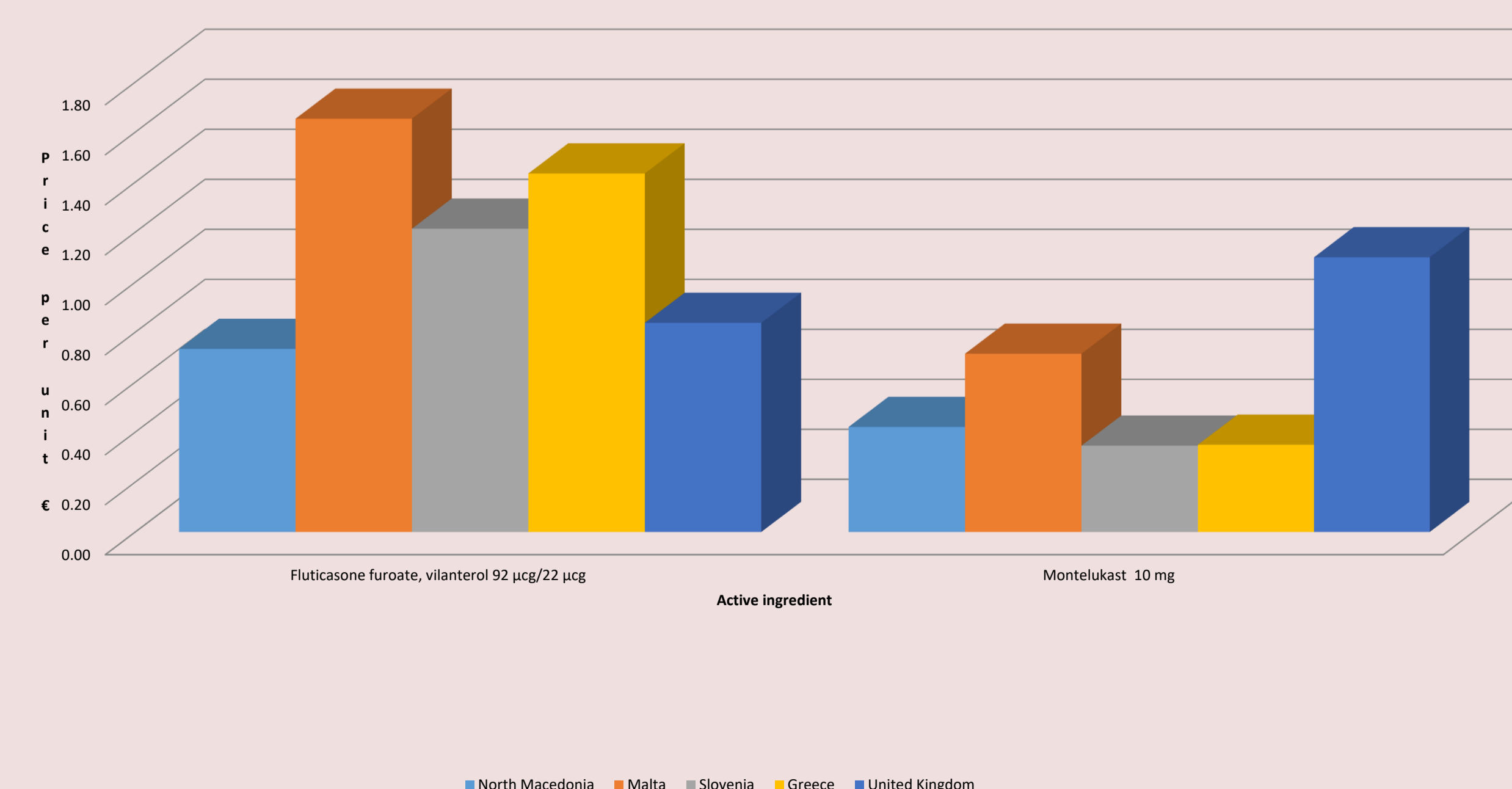


Table 1: Comparison of prices of medicines indicated for cardiovascular disease (N=19)

	North Macedonia, Price per Unit (€)	Malta, Price per Unit (€)	Slovenia, Price per Unit (€)	Greece, Price per Unit (€)	United Kingdom, Price per Unit (€)	Price Range	Average price	SD
Amiodarone hydrochloride tablet 200 mg	0.08	0.36	0.27	0.10	0.28	0.28	0.22	0.12
Clopidogrel tablet 75 mg	0.29	0.78	0.39	0.78	1.35	1.07	0.72	0.42
Rivaroxaban tablet 10 mg	2.42	3.04	1.77	2.59	2.05	1.27	2.37	0.49
Apixaban tablet 5mg	1.23	1.18	0.92	1.12	1.08	0.31	1.11	0.12
Carvedilol tablet 6.25mg	0.05	0.37	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.32	0.13	0.13
Atenolol tablet 100mg	0.06	0.09	0.25	0.10	0.21	0.19	0.14	0.08
Nebivolol tablet 5mg	0.20	0.45	0.14	0.09	0.38	0.36	0.25	0.15
Amlodipine tablet 5mg	0.02	0.16	0.07	0.19	0.68	0.65	0.23	0.26
Indapamide tablet 1.5mg	0.08	0.26	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.07
Enalapril tablet 5mg	0.05	0.45	0.07	0.14	0.17	0.40	0.17	0.16
Lisinopril tablet 5mg	0.15	0.40	0.06	0.10	0.31	0.34	0.20	0.15
Perindopril tablet 4mg	0.15	0.62	0.11	0.17	0.24	0.51	0.26	0.21
Candesartan tablet 8mg	0.19	0.81	0.17	0.34	0.40	0.64	0.38	0.26
Valsartan tablet 80mg	0.21	0.89	0.17	0.27	0.57	0.72	0.42	0.30
Telmisartan tablet 40mg	0.23	0.96	0.39	0.22	0.21	0.75	0.40	0.32
Atorvastatin tablet 10 mg	0.07	0.66	0.17	0.29	0.53	0.58	0.34	0.25
Rosuvastatin tablet 10 mg	0.22	1.01	0.35	0.73	0.73	0.79	0.61	0.32
Simvastatin tablet 20 mg	0.10	0.25	0.15	0.23	1.21	1.11	0.39	0.46

Table 2: Comparison of prices of medicines indicated for respiratory disease (N=9)

	North Macedonia, Price per Unit (€)	Malta, Price per Unit (€)	Slovenia, Price per Unit (€)	Greece, Price per Unit (€)	United Kingdom, Price per Unit (€)	Price Range	Average price	SD
Mometasone nose spray 50 µg	0.06	0.10	0.03	0.10	0.06	0.08	0.07	0.03
Fluticasone prssured suspension for inhalation 50 µg	0.06	0.10	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.07	0.02
Fluticasone furoate, vilanterol powder for inhalation 92 µg/22 µg	0.73	1.65	1.21	1.43	0.84	0.92	1.17	0.39
Fluticasone, salmeterol powder for inhalation 100 µg/50 µg	0.41	0.56	0.27	0.37	0.34	0.29	0.39	0.11
Fluticasone, azelastine nose spray 50 µg/ 137 µg	0.14	0.17	0.11	0.16	0.14	0.06	0.14	0.02
Salbutamol prssured suspension for inhalation 100 µg	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.07
Salbutamol syrup 2 mg/5 ml	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.02
Montelukast tablet 10 mg	0.42	0.71	0.35	0.35	1.10	0.75	0.59	0.32
Prednisolone tablet 5 mg	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.02

CONCLUSION

The study showed significant price variation between countries. Having a more thorough knowledge about prices of medicines in different countries can contribute to making policies that will ultimately make medicines more affordable and accessible to patients.

REFERENCE

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