

# Considerable variation in cost of generic topical corticosteroids

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(HealthDay)—There is considerable variation in the unit cost of topical corticosteroids across potencies and by branded generic or generic product, according to a research letter published online Aug. 19 in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Alexander Skojec, from the Penn State Hershey College of Medicine, and colleagues examined variation in costs of generic topical corticosteroids of various potencies. They retrospectively analyzed the Truven Health MarketScan Commercial Claims and Encounters Database, which offered data for health insurance claims paid by about 100 payers for more than 120 million U.S. individuals. The copayment and average wholesale price (AWP) for medications were extracted.

The researchers observed variation in the cost of topical corticosteroids

across potencies, class, and by branded generic or generic product. For branded generic products, claims were less frequent and had higher copayment and AWP. Among generic [topical corticosteroids](#) in the same class there were considerable cost differences; for example, a 15-g or 30-g tube of triamcinolone acetonide 0.01 percent had a mean cost that was 30 to 40 percent lower than other mid-potency medications. Different size tubes of the same medication also differed in the price per gram. Copayments were three to five times higher for branded generic products versus generic products with the same ingredient and unit size.

"Health care professionals may preserve high-quality patient care while reducing cost for the patient by being aware of the differences in [generic medications](#)," the authors write.

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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