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PSNC Briefing 052/15: NHS medicines database (dm+d)

This briefing explains for pharmacy teams what dm+d is, how it impacts on **EPS** and reimbursement, and how pharmacy teams or system suppliers can use dm+d or dm+d viewers to help pre-determine reimbursement.

The Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d) is the NHS standard database of medicinal items. It is used across the NHS (e.g. in EPS, and by NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) for their prescription pricing). Pharmacy and GP system suppliers synchronise to dm+d listings and information. Each medicinal item has an entry in the database and information is stored at generic, product and pack level (see images below that demonstrate the dm+d contents).

Reimbursement/EPS issues

Each medicinal item listed in dm+d has a unique code and products are added or updated by suppliers. EPS prescription reimbursement is linked to the prescription dm+d item code, therefore it is recommended pharmacy teams consider:

- ✓ **Electronic endorsing:** Additional information for pricing use can only be provided by endorsing the electronic prescription using your PMR system endorsement options therefore token endorsements won't be used for pricing.
- * **Supplementary product information added by the prescriber in the dosage section of an EPS prescription:** NHSBSA can't use this product information immediately after the dosage instructions (psnc.org.uk/dosageissue).
- * **Non-dm+d items are outside the scope of EPS so may not be processed and priced correctly:** Most items which are prescribed are listed in dm+d, but if a prescriber wishes to prescribe a medication item which is not listed in the dm+d (e.g. many special formulations), or their prescribing system does not synchronise to the item yet, an electronic prescription should not be issued by EPS and national paper prescription processes should be followed.

Using dm+d viewers and the database (pharmacy teams)

PSNC recommends pharmacy teams use and 'bookmark' a dm+d viewer.

Two free options:

1. **OpenPrescribing dm+d viewer;** and
2. **NHSBSA dm+d viewer.** Or also: **Datapharm dm+d viewer (fee/login may apply).**

Viewers support your dispensing and calculating work. Datapharm image examples show dm+d's structure: at generic (VMP), supplier (AMP), and pack (AMPP) levels.

'Generic' perspective e.g. 'Atenolol 100mg tablet'
This is the generic product title described as the virtual medicinal product (VMP). Information in this part of the database determines things such as the drug form and whether the medicine is a Controlled Drug.

VMP describes the generic product

CD status of a product

Here there are links to the suppliers' product (AMP level, see picture opposite).

Virtual Medicinal Product Attributes	
ID	318421004
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets
Date name is applicable from	
Short Name	
Basis of Name	INN - Recommended International N
Prescribing Status	Valid as a prescribable product
Controlled Drug Prescribing Information	
Controlled Drug Category	No Controlled Drug Status
Actual Medicinal Products	
Name	Antipressan 100mg tablets (Teva UK)
Name	Atenix 100 tablets (Ashbourne Pharm)
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Actavis UK Ltd)
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Sandoz Ltd)
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Wockhardt U)
Virtual Medicinal Product Packs	
ID	5511711000001106
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets 14 tablet

Link to the relevant pack levels, or the virtual medicinal product pack (VMPP). Information here determines such things as Drug Tariff category and whether the item is a combi-pack.

Supplier's product perspective e.g. Tenormin 100mg tablets (AstraZeneca)
This is the product level which is usually linked to a particular supplier, or the 'actual medicinal product' (AMP). The supplier can have information listed here relating to availability and licensing status.

Name of product

Manufacturer/Supplier

Actual Medicinal Product Attributes	
ID	275811000001_03
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets
Description	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Actavis UK Ltd UK Ltd)
Supplier Name	Actavis UK Ltd
Invalid	No
Combination Product Indicator	N/A
Licensing Authority	Medicines - MHRA/EMA
Virtual Medicinal Product Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets
Actual Medicinal Product Packs	
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Actavis UK Ltd) 28 tablet 2 x 14 tablets
Links	
BNF Code	02100100
PIL	Patient Information Leaflet
SPC	Summary of Product Characteristics

Licensing status of product

Link to the relevant pack levels

Link to patient information leaflet

Supplier's product pack perspective
e.g. 'Tenormin 100mg tablets (AstraZeneca) 28 tablet'

This describes the pack levels relating to the above, or the 'actual medicinal product pack' (AMPP). The supplier can list the NHS-listed price, whether broken bulk can be claimed, and whether the product is a POM, a 'special container', 'discounted' etc.

Actual Medicinal Product Pack Attributes	
Actual Medicinal Product Pack Identifier	1328611000001102
Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets (Actavis UK Ltd) 28 tablet 2 x 14 tablets
Sub-pack Information	2 x 14 tablets
Combination Pack	N/A
Legal Category	POM
Discontinued	Never been discontinued
Actual Medicinal Product Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets
Virtual Medicinal Product Pack Name	Atenolol 100mg tablets 28 tablet
Reimbursement Information	
Prescription Charges	1
Dispensing Fees	1
Broken Bulk Eligibility	Yes
Limited Stability Preparation	No
Calendar Pack	Yes
Special Container	
Discount Not Deducted	
FP34 D Prescription	
Price Information	
PRICE	70
Date of price validity	07/02/2014
Previous Price	113
Price Basis	NHS Indicative Price

Pack size/subpack size

If a product is P, POM, or GSL

This section includes:
 • patient prescription charges;
 • professional dispensing fees;
 • broken bulk eligibility;
 • special container status; and
 • discount not deducted status.

Note: Indicative NHS price does not always apply to reimbursement e.g. where a Part VIII item has been prescribed generically, or if a product has recently changed in price (then the Drug Tariff's price change mechanism would apply, see psnc.org.uk/pricematch).

EPS dm+d and paper differences

EPS prescribing uses generic (VMP) or product (AMP) dm+d code. EPS/paper prescriptions variations relate to:

- Changes to medicine descriptions compared with historical medicine descriptions:** E.g. 'enteric coated' tablets are described in dm+d as 'gastro-resistant', and dm+d uses 'dose' for inhalers (not 'actuation', 'inhalation' or 'puff'). dm+d products describe in order: product, strength, and form.
- Quantities and units of measurement:** Prescribers select dm+d quantities instead of 'packs'. E.g. '120 dose' rather than '1 inhaler'. Systems can support users by calculating the quantity as a number of packs.
- Terminology length and abbreviations:** Many products list an abbreviated name to assist label-space issues.

Mapping and data quality impacts

- EPS supplier mapping process, timing and impacts:** Most system suppliers use their own drug databases and 'map' ('synchronise') to dm+d listings (mandated minimums: most frequent 95% (est. 2,100) items and once per two months). This enables EPS messages to be sent/received for most dm+d items. Suppliers map at least monthly to align to Drug Tariff/dm+d changes. [PSNC and Community Pharmacy IT Group \(CP ITG\)](#) recommend suppliers map frequently/widely to prevent EPS problems for new/changed dm+d items and to reduce paper scripts being needed instead of EPS. Items could be within dm+d but not yet within prescribing systems. EPS users should update their systems regularly for the most recent information to be within their local system.
- Reporting medicine 'mapping errors' (EPS):** Prescribers, pharmacy teams or others may report dm+d or mapping issues as required. The reporting process is set out at [PSNC dm+d webpage – reporting section](#).
- Manufacturers and wholesalers should update dm+d** to keep it accurate when there are changes, to support clinical outcomes and correct NHS pricing. Contractors may query suppliers not keeping their entries accurate.

Further information

Read more at: psnc.org.uk/dmd and about other [standards](#). Use dm+d viewers: [OpenPrescribing viewer](#); [NHSBSA viewer](#); and [Datapharm viewer \(login/fee may apply\)](#). For more information or for EPS/IT queries please contact, [Daniel Ah-Thion, Community Pharmacy IT Lead](#). For dispensing/pricing queries contact [Dispensing & Supply Team](#).