


## Beliefs, Perceptions and Behaviours of GPs towards Generic Medicines



Dunne, S.S.,  
Shannon, B.,  
Cullen W.,  
Dunne, C.P.  
Graduate Entry  
Medical School,  
University of  
Limerick  
Centre for  
Interventions in  
Infection,  
Inflammation &  
Immunity (4i),  
Graduate Entry  
Medical School,  
University of  
Limerick

### ABSTRACT

Ireland introduced generic substitution and reference pricing in June 2013 to benefit from cost savings associated with generic medicine use. The attitudes and behaviours of healthcare professionals may influence successful implementation of such changes.

The objective was to assess perceptions of GPs in Ireland regarding generic medicines in the time leading up to the enactment of the new legislation and for the first time in at least the prior decade.

Detailed one-to-one semi-structured interviews were performed with a representative cohort of 34 urban and rural-based GPs in Ireland.

Thirty of the participating 34 GPs prescribed generic medicines actively. Predominantly, participants believed that generics worked as effectively, and were of the same quality, as originator medicines. However, 32 GPs reported receiving patient complaints regarding generics; almost a third reported complaints of increased or altered side effects. Thirty-two GPs stated that they would take a generic medicine, although one in seven would choose the originator if offered a choice. A minority of GPs were of the view that generics are manufactured to a poorer quality than originators and may be a risk to patient safety.

This study of GPs' attitudes towards generic medicines in Ireland highlights that this key stakeholder group has generally positive attitudes towards both generic medicines and the new legislation. However, variable knowledge about generic medicines and concerns regarding patient experience, clinical effectiveness and manufacturing quality were identified. GPs' opinions could negatively influence patient opinions; enhancing such opinions may prove important in successfully implementing the new legislation.

### FUNDING

This work was supported in part by a scholarship from the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick, Ireland.

### SOURCE

Family Practice, 2014, Vol. 00, No. 00, 1–8 doi:10.1093/fampra/cmu024