A Question of Ethics

May 12, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

I received an email this morning that revisits the issue of prices and greed. Around the world there are many desperate people trying to access affordable generic Hep c treatment. Sure for people in the USA or the UK or many European countries the price of around US$1,500 is cheap but for amny people, indeed a high portion of people, this is still a very large amount of money, out of reach for many people. So it really saddens me to see people selling generics at huge profit margins, margins of 200% or more. Sure if a person is providing a service and spending time and energy on it then there should be a fair margin of profit so that they can devote the time and energy needed to run this as a business. If the supplying of generic Hep C treatment is to be done effectively and efficiently then it has to be run as a business and there needs to be some profit to cover time and expenses but it needs to be a fair profit. There is too much greed and too much exploitation of vunerable and desperate people with Hep C from Big Pharma, now we see it from "little Pharma" as well.
It is very sad.
I see the solution is in educating people as to what the right prices are.
The maximum that people should be paying for generic Hepatitis C medication, including shipping costs, is US$1,500 for a 12 week treatment. This is for either generic Harvoni or generic Sofosbuvir + Daclatasvir.

For you information below is the email conversation thread.

Date: Mon, 9 May 2016 11:21:08 +0300
> Subject: Perhaps a question of ethics
> From: ########
> To: gregjefferys@outlook.com
>
Dear Greg,

I send you this e-mail because I feel I can discuss it better with you.

I've seen on internet that there are several people in RO who "provide" the service to supply to Hep C patients the generic medication at a price that is between 3 - 12 times more than the cost from India. Most often the prices are in the range of 3 to 5000 Euro (i.e $4000 USD).

This amount is considerably high for many people from Romania (for some it is impossible to gather all this money) and it is iritating to know that in fact the medication is available at a far better price. but they just don't know it!!!!

However I feel that starting to "fight" with people about these prices on internet/forums/comments with such high prices might have a side effect: it might discourage people seeking treatment to procure the

generic medication to cure themselves, no matter if the price is 1000 or 4000 USD.

The only thought that makes me feel better is in fact a hope that perhaps in 1-2 years the HCV generic medication will be available worldwide and at an affordable price so that people may access it from their local farmacies as easy as they would take any other pills, having just the doctor's prescription.

Best Regards,
> ########

My Reply:

Hi ####
The issue of profit is a difficult one.
People doing this supplying of generic Hep C medicines must make some income because it takes up a lot of time to organise these things. However it should be a fair profit, not an excessive profit, because there is already too much greed in this area.

My personal position is that I charge a small fee that is about 10% on the costs for sending out of India. Of course I also make clear that if a person has difficulties finding the money then I happily will remove my fee and send at my cost. In my opinion money should not obstruct a person from access to treatment.

I guess the main thing, the best way to stop profiteering, is to just get the correct information about prices well known, the absolute maximum price that anyone should be paying for any generic DAA combination, including shipment is 1,250 Euros for a 12 week treatment, including shipment costs but not import duties. If this fact is commonly then if people pay the high prices it is their foolishness for not doing proper research.
It is about education. If people know the correct prices then they will not pay the excessive prices you mentioned

best wishes
Greg

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