

Seizure Drugs Contribution to Drug Trend in 2008

Seizure drugs

Plan cost: 4.0%

Trend: 13.9%

Treatments: Epilepsy, neuropathic pain, psychiatric disorders

Utilization growth increased for anticonvulsants because of the continuing expansion of indications for these drugs, such as bipolar depression, neuropathic pain, and fibromyalgia. For example, Lyrica® was approved for treating fibromyalgia in 2007.²⁵ Generic versions of Trileptal®, Lamictal®, Keppra®, and Depakote® became available from late 2007 through 2008, thereby making the anticonvulsant drug class predominantly generic. This pattern has been further extended since the blockbuster drug Topamax® became available in generic form in early 2009.

Given that seizure drugs have been a trend driver for many years and that drugs in this class, which have combined sales well in excess of \$6 billion per year, have fallen to generic competition, it is likely that unit-cost growth will decline in the coming years.

Utilization: 6.1%

- Utilization growth was especially strong for gabapentin and Lyrica.
- Growth was also seen for Topamax and for Keppra and its generics.

Unit Cost: 7.4%

- Unit-cost growth increased sharply for Lyrica.