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Effectiveness of EpiPen and Its Alternatives

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to compare the effectiveness of the EpiPen and its alternatives. EpiPens are the first-line treatment for systemic allergic reactions. The pharmaceutical company Mylan first came into existence in 1961, distributing medical and health products to medical professionals with the goal of providing access to affordable medicine. EpiPens now-a-days can cost anywhere from \$650-\$700, while alternatives like Symjepi cost around \$200, Adrenaclick is about \$500 and Auvi-Q is around \$5,000 for a twin pack but can be free with insurance. For this project we looked at various different sources about each brand. From those sources we compared the information gathered and based the conclusion off of the sources that were all 5 years or younger. We looked at pricing and insurance, price trends, and the differences of each epinephrine auto-injector. It was concluded that the cheaper alternatives are equally as effective as EpiPen.

Introduction

Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for systemic allergic reactions, however, epinephrine autoinjectors are expensive and availability is limited. The pharmaceutical company Mylan first came into existence in 1961, distributing medical and health products to medical professionals with the goal of providing access to affordable medicine. Mylan has now grown into a company with more than 7,500 different products. Sheldon Kaplan designed the EpiPen in 1980 for Survival Technology, Inc. (National Inventors Hall of Fame, 2016). In 2007 Mylan bought the rights to EpiPen, and the price has since risen from \$57 to \$600 or more (Cuollo, 2018, p. 265). In an article by Adam Rubenfire (2016), the cost for one EpiPen injector in 1986 was around \$36 (Rubenfire, 2016). There are cheaper generic epinephrine autoinjectors available on the market now that have been found to be as effective as the name brand EpiPen.

Methods

For this project we looked at articles that talked about the price of EpiPens. From those articles we found what possible alternatives could be. Finding out the alternatives allowed us to narrow our search and compare 2-3 different types of alternatives, Auvi-Q, Adrenaclick, and Symjepi. For this project we looked at articles that talked about the price of EpiPens. From those articles we found what possible alternatives could be. Finding out the alternatives allowed us to narrow our search and compare 2-3 different types of alternatives, Auvi-Q, Adrenaclick, and Symjepi. We compared, price and insurance, price trends, and the differences between each alternative.

Price of EpiPen and alternatives

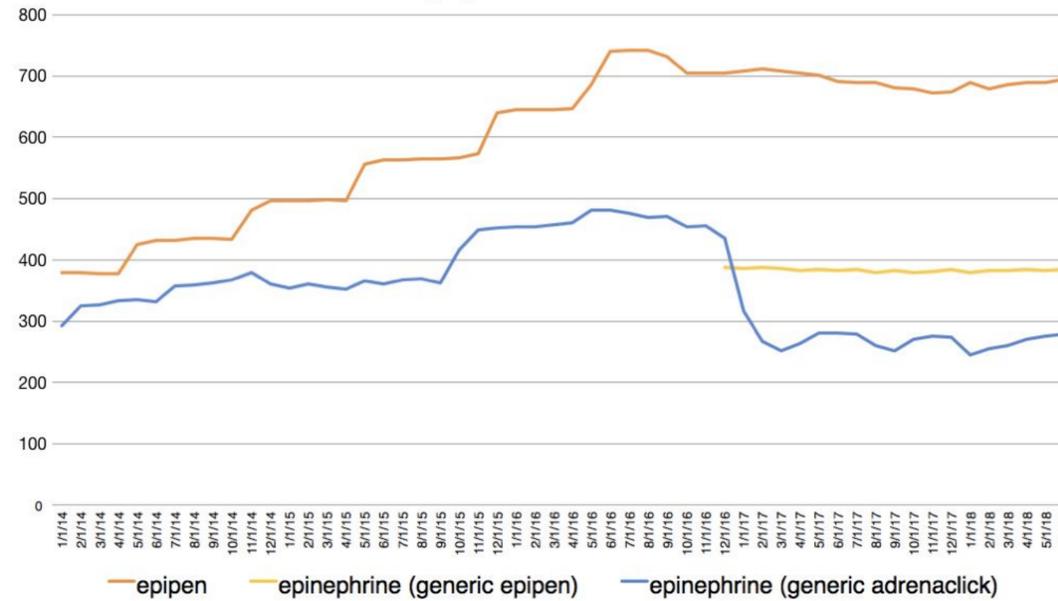


Figure. 1



Evaluation & Analysis

EpiPens cost about \$600 or more for a twin pack and a trainer device. Some insurance companies cover the whole cost of the EpiPen. Other companies negotiate the price on how much they are willing to take off (Cleveland Clinic, 2019). When looking for alternatives for EpiPens it is found that Auvi-Q is around \$5,000 for a twin pack (Anderson, L., 2020). However, it can be free for anyone with commercial insurance. It is also available for mail-order pharmacy (Cleveland Clinic, 2019). Another alternative, Adrenaclick, is only \$100 less than the EpiPens, making it \$500 for the twin pack. However, a more affordable generic version can be found at CVS for about \$110 (Cleveland Clinic, 2019). Figure.1 shows a comparison between generic EpiPen and Adrenaclick and their price trends from 2014-2018 (GoodRx, 2018). Lastly, Symjepi is a newer prescription epinephrine device. It costs about \$240-\$280 for a twin pack (Anderson, L., 2020). For Symjepi it does not look like there is any insurance coverage. In the articles found it was based solely on price, it did not mention if any one worked better or worse than an EpiPen.

Conclusion & Implications for Future Research

It can be concluded that Epinephrine products cannot be used as a prophylactic. It is used as an emergency medication. In terms of alternatives to the EpiPen they are less expensive. However, the alternatives are not any better or worse than an EpiPen. The main difference between all of them is that some have a trainer device and others don't. Ultimately, the alternatives are good for saving money and will work just as well as the name brand EpiPen. For future research a study could be done that focuses only on how effective the alternatives are.

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