

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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DEPARTMENT.

## PRESCRIPTION PRICING.

BY GUSTAV BACHMAN AND RUGNAR ALMIN.

When word was received from Prof. A. B. Nichols, Chairman of the Conference of Teachers of Pharmacy, asking me to prepare a brief paper on "prescription pricing" I immediately consulted with Mr. Almin, my co-worker, how best to obtain such information. It was decided that a questionnaire be prepared and mailed to a select list of pharmacists in Minnesota setting forth the purpose of the questionnaire and asking for their coöperation in submitting the minimum charges for compounding prescriptions calling for liquids of various quantities, pills both ready made and hand made, capsules, powders, suppositories and ointments. In sending out the questionnaires special effort was made to solicit the desired information from pharmacists located in towns where there were two or more drug stores. Out of 220 questionnaires mailed 108 or nearly 50% were promptly returned and properly filled out. The following data have been compiled. The lowest and highest prices for each prescription are given first and afterwards the prevailing charge for the prescription: It may be interesting to compare the prices charged for the prescriptions in the Twin Cities and in country towns and, for your convenience, columns with prices are given below:

*Prices charged for prescriptions compounded in  
the Twin Cities.*

### Liquids:—

- 1/2 fl. oz., prices ranged from 25¢ to 50¢; prevailing price 35¢.
- 1 fl. oz., prices from 35¢ to 65¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 2 fl. oz., prices from 50¢ to 75¢; prevailing price, 65¢.
- 3 fl. oz., prices from 60¢ to 85¢; prevailing price 75¢.
- 4 fl. oz., prices from 75¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 85¢.

### Hand Made Pills:—

- 12 pills, prices from 35¢ to 85¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 pills, prices from 60¢ to \$1.10; prevailing price 75¢.
- 50 pills, prices from 75¢ to \$1.75; prevailing price \$1.00.
- 100 pills, prices from \$1.25 to \$3.50; prevailing price \$1.50.

*Prices charged for the same prescription com-  
pounded in country towns.*

### Liquids:—

- 1/2 fl. oz., prices ranged from 15¢ to 50¢; prevailing price 25¢.
- 1 fl. oz., prices from 20¢ to 65¢; prevailing price 35¢.
- 2 fl. oz., prices from 25¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 3 fl. oz., prices from 25¢ to 85¢; prevailing price 75¢.
- 4 fl. oz., prices from 35¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 75¢.

### Hand Made Pills:—

- 12 pills, prices from 25¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 pills, prices from 50¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 75¢.
- 50 pills, prices from 50¢ to \$1.50; prevailing price \$1.00.
- 100 pills, prices from \$1.00 to \$2.00; prevailing price \$1.50.

**Ready Made Pills or Tablets:—**

- 12 pills, prices from 25¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 pills, prices from 30¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 75¢.
- 50 pills, prices from 50¢ to \$1.25; prevailing price \$1.00.
- 100 pills prices from 75¢ to \$2.00; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Capsules:—**

- 12 capsules, prices from 35¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 capsules, prices from 65¢ to \$1.25; prevailing price \$1.00.
- 50 capsules, prices from \$1 to \$2.25; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Powders:—**

- 12 powders, prices from 50¢ to \$1; prevailing price 75¢.
- 25 powders, prices from 65¢ to \$1.50; prevailing price \$1.
- 36 powders, prices from 95¢ to \$1.85; prevailing price \$1.25.

**Suppositories:—**

- 6 suppositories, prices from 40¢ to \$1.25; prevailing price 75¢.
- 12 suppositories, prices from 75¢ to \$2; prevailing price \$1.

**Ointments:—**

- 1/2 oz., prices from 25¢ to 55¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 1 oz., prices from 35¢ to 80¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 2 oz., prices from 50¢ to \$1.10; prevailing price 75¢.

**Ready Made Pills or Tablets:—**

- 12 pills, prices from 10¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 25¢.
- 25 pills, prices from 25¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 50¢.
- 50 pills, prices from 25¢ to \$1.25; prevailing price 75¢.
- 100 pills, prices from 50¢ to \$2.50; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Capsules:—**

- 12 capsules, prices from 25¢ to 85¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 capsules, prices from 35¢ to \$1.50; prevailing price 75¢.
- 50 capsules, prices from 50¢ to \$2.00; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Powders:—**

- 12 powders, prices from 25¢ to 75¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 25 powders, prices from 35¢ to \$1.00; prevailing price 75¢.
- 36 powders, prices from 50¢ to \$1.50; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Suppositories:—**

- 6 suppositories, prices from 25¢ to \$1.25; prevailing price 50¢.
- 12 suppositories, prices from 40¢ to \$1.50; prevailing price \$1.00.

**Ointments:—**

- 1/2 oz., prices from 15¢ to 55¢; prevailing price 25¢.
- 1 oz., prices from 25¢ to 80¢; prevailing price 50¢.
- 2 oz., prices from 35¢ to \$1.10; prevailing price 75¢.

From the wide range in prices asked it is evident that some pharmacists have no conception whatsoever as to what is a legitimate minimum compounding charge for the prescriptions that they dispense. It seems that they belittle their professional services to the point wherein the compounding and dispensing of a prescription becomes an ordinary "grocery store" transaction.

Upon examination of the questionnaires returned we found that in most cases the druggists in the small towns with no competition asked the lowest minimum compounding fee, whereas they are better situated to ask a higher compounding fee than the druggist located in towns where two or more drug stores are found.

The prevailing minimum fee asked in the Twin Cities was quite consistent with the prevailing fee asked in the country towns.

If the prevailing fee can be taken as a standard to be considered as the proper minimum fee to be asked for these various preparations, then some pharmacists are not receiving what they should in compounding such prescriptions. Compara-

tively the minimum charge asked by some pharmacists is ridiculously low; this is especially true in the country towns. Let me cite for comparison the minimum fee asked by some pharmacists in the Twin Cities and in the country towns with the prevailing charge for liquid preparations in various quantities.

	Country towns.	Twin Cities.	Prevailing price.
$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	15 cents	25 cents	35 cents
or a difference of 20 cents in the country towns, and 10 cents in the Twin Cities from the prevailing price.			
1 ounce	20 cents	35 cents	50 cents
or a difference of 30 cents in the country towns, and 15 cents in the Twin Cities from the prevailing prices.			
3 ounces	25 cents	60 cents	75 cents
or a difference of 50 cents in the country towns, and 15 cents in the Twin Cities from the prevailing price.			
4 ounces	40 cents	75 cents	85 cents
or a difference of 45 cents in the country towns, and 10 cents in the Twin Cities from the prevailing prices.			

What has been said about the pricing of the liquids is equally true of the fees charged for compounding other kinds of prescriptions.

We have no reason to believe that the prices reported by some pharmacists were given to make comparison look ridiculous. The lowest and highest prices for each prescription named in many cases were reported by but few pharmacists; the prevailing prices are averages obtained in many instances from more than 100 questionnaires and may be considered as the usual fee for compounding such prescriptions. Pharmacists, in my mind, are underestimating their professional service by charging 20¢ to fill a prescription calling for one fl. oz. mixture.

It is our opinion that the prevailing prices given in the first column can be taken as a fair minimum charge for compounding prescriptions.

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## GMELIN, A GERMAN FAMILY OF PHARMACISTS, CHEMISTS AND BOTANISTS.\*

BY OTTO RAUBENHEIMER.

German pharmacy and German pharmacists have led the way for centuries. Even France makes this acknowledgment, as LaChesnaye des Bois in his "Dictionnaire historique des moeurs, usages et coutumes des François," Paris 1767, Tome I, page 92 makes the following statement: "On dit communement Médécins d'Angleterre, chirurgiens de France et apothicaires d'Allemagne pour designer celles des nations qui excellent dans une de ces professions."

Among German pharmacists, chemists, botanists, physicians, naturalists and even lawyers, the name Gmelin is pre-eminent. That this family of scientists originated in an apothecary shop, which is still in existence to-day, in the university town Tübingen, Wirttemberg in the 17th century, is a credit to pharmacy, of which our profession can justly be proud. It is the ambition of every German

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\* Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. PH. A., Rapid City meeting, 1929.