# Variation in Prices of Common Drugs: Case Study from Two Remote Districts of Nepal (2007)

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**Background**

In remote areas of the Nepal, where poverty prevails, essential medicines are out of reach for one third of the population. People who do not have some access to such medicines need to pay higher prices compared to the people living in the centrally locate urban or semi-urban areas of the country. Normally the price of medicine is uniform throughout country but due to transportation costs, medical prices tend to be higher in the remote areas. There is lack of information regarding the price difference.

**Methods**

The research was designed as descriptive study. Humla and Okhaldhunga districts were purposively selected. The duration of study was from September-December 2006. The study included all the pharmacies existed in the headquarters of the two districts. The list of price of common drugs of these districts was obtained through different approaches-surrogate customer, observation of drug sell and interview with the customer. The retail price of the drugs was compared in different ways.

**Results**

The result showed that price of the common drugs are higher in Humla and Okhaldhunga compared to the price in Kathmandu. There was a wide variation in price between the same drugs produced by different manufacturers in both districts. It was found that price varied among pharmacies for the same drug and brand.

**Conclusions**

There is great variation in the prices of medicines in these two districts. Prices charged seemed to be very high as compared to the Maximum Retailing Price.

**Keywords:** drugs; maximum retailing price; pharmacies; price variation.