

Drug companies are quietly pushing through price hikes of 100% — or even more than 1,000% — for a very small but growing number of prescription drugs, helping to drive up costs for insurers, patients and government programs.

Among the examples: Questcor Pharmaceuticals last August raised the wholesale price on Acthar, which treats spasms in babies, from about \$1,650 a vial to more than \$23,000. Ovation raised the cost of Cosmegen, which treats a type of tumor, from \$16.79 to \$593.75 in January 2006.

The average wholesale price of 26 brand-name drugs jumped 100% or more in a single cost adjustment last year, up from 15 in 2004, the university study found. In the first half of this year, 17 drugs made the list.

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