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| Title | HTA Ostomy Appliances in Belgium |
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| Reference | KCE Reports, 21A. Ref. D/2005/10.273/27. 2005. www.centreexpertise.fgov.be/documents/D20051027327.pdf , www.centreexpertise.fgov.be/documents/D20051027328.pdf |

Aim

To assess the Belgian market for ostomy appliances from the perspective of the patient and healthcare system.

Conclusions and results

Since the clinical effectiveness of ostomy appliances is sparsely documented, the cost effectiveness of ostomy appliances could not be assessed. However, a cost analysis was done to estimate the ex factory price for a standard bag and pad (single and double-sided) for colostomy and ileostomy patients. The analysis shows that the market price for the patient and health care is largely determined by the end distributor. In this context, a factor of 2.5 seems likely (ie, the purchase cost at importation is 2/5 of the total market price). An international price comparison shows that the total annual cost of ostomy products for a Belgian patient is average for the countries considered. Internationally, it appears that the Belgian regulations have little flexibility and give the ostomy therapist little official authority.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the Belgian Healthcare Knowledge Centre aim at raising flexibility in material choice, open decision making, and competitive market action to improve the benefits to patients.

Methods

A literature review was used to assess the medical effectiveness and related costs of ostomy appliances, manufacturers were asked to make available all relevant clinical studies, and a group of external scientific experts was assembled.

Production costs were estimated using the material requirements and hypotheses about the use of labor and capital. The results of these estimates are an input factor, ie, purchase costs for national distributors. An international price comparison between Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom illustrated the relative position taken by Belgium. The

homogeneity of the items compared was respected as much as possible, both as regards the comparability of selected products (product name, manufacturer, material components, etc) and macroeconomic factors (purchasing power in the countries concerned, reimbursement systems, tax rates, etc). We compared the most important institutional factors (pricing, reimbursement, distribution channels, and authorized prescribers) for the 5 European countries and the Canadian province of Ontario.

The specific Belgian context was investigated by analyzing information obtained from questionnaire responses, either verbally or in writing, by the actors involved (patients, manufacturers, bandagers, and policy makers were requested to identify points for attention, especially difficulties in the current system).

Further research/reviews required

Ostomy therapists should set up prospective clinical research into factors that determine patient satisfaction.

Epidemiological base data, concerning patients in ambulatory and hospital care environments, should be collected longitudinally for Belgium.