



<b>Title</b>	<b>Non-ionic Contrast Media: Clinical Relevance of Different CM-products</b>
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## Aim

To analyze the many different non-ionic (monomer) contrast media (CM) products in regard to the actual clinical relevance of their differences in order to give advice for more concerted purchasing of CM.

## Conclusions and results

Central purchasing of pharmaceuticals is a consideration that arises from the increasing economic pressure on hospital budgets. An assessment was conducted, and funded, by the largest Austrian hospital cooperation (25% of hospital market). Seven different NI-CM are used in routine care. The findings show:

- Osmolality, nephrotoxicity, viscosity, hydrophilicity, and electric charge are the criteria along which the CM can be differentiated.
- The analyzed NI-CM show similar pharmacokinetic and dynamic attributes.
- All analyzed NI-CM are safe in their application. Incompatibility and adverse reactions are minimal, and diagnostic accuracy is at a comparably high level.
- If the iodine concentration and the (intravasal) application protocol are similar, there are only minimal, or not reproducible, differences in safety and diagnostic quality.
- There are no clinically relevant differences between the 7 (analyzed) different non-ionic monomer CM-products.
- Along valid definitions, the products are “me-too” agents – under patent protection.
- In reaction to the many me-too pharmaceuticals, and the enormous price-differences between EU countries, purchasing units of hospitals have started to react: interesting models evolve.

A decision to concentrate on 2–3 products would reduce expenses for CM by 30%. A decision between three modes of (re-)action for hospital purchasers were

identified and are proposed as options: 1. Tightening the product range on the basis of best clinical performance (e.g. vigilance register), best offers, or cumulated radiologists’ preferences. 2. Inquiry on industry’s financial support for technical material, education and training, congresses etc., followed by own price calculation without add-ons (but creating an independent fund) and tender by price instead of by product. 3. Linking commissioning with conditions (comparative research from users’ perspective, education and training on purchasers’ topics, in-payment in independently administered fund).

## Methods

Extensive literature search in MEDLINE searching for substance and labeled product, self-limited by actual availability of older citations, systematic review on 7 non-ionic monomer CM. Additional search for literature (mainly gray) on me-too agents, patent law, and market forces.