



Prices and price developments for medical devices

Although some basic price structure and other relevant information may be found on the Internet, it is not common to share prices and margins publicly. As in some other sectors, this is, considered to be confidential due to competitive considerations. In most EU countries, there is a limited number of suppliers and competition is fierce. Real price information will only be made available when this has become an accepted part of negotiations. DC exporters are therefore advised to be careful when sharing price information with interested parties.

Prices of EU imports

In general, the products that are imported in the EU and originate from DCs are relatively standard and not as sophisticated as those sourced from developed countries. This is also the reason why the price level of medical devices imports from DCs is lower than the price level of intra-EU imports or imports from other leading suppliers to the EU market (mainly the USA, Canada and Japan).

Prices in the EU market

In general, medical devices are less price sensitive than medical disposables. Prices have not been under pressure so much. In the period 2005-2009 prices remained relatively stable or grew slightly (0-2% per year). At the same time, for some product groups, (cheap) imports originating from DCs drove market prices downward. One example is Brazil; imports of dental equipment from Brazil to the EU market have put pressure on market prices.

In addition, it must be noted that international producers (who are mostly market leaders) have a significant influence on pricing. In the near future, when technologies developed by large medical device companies are incorporated into the manufacturing processes of DC manufacturers, one can expect to see an additional downward price pressure on the products available on the market. An example of such a development is that of Generic Medical Devices (GMD; <http://www.genericmedicaldevices.com>) which produces a universal circumcision clamp. With significantly less overhead than larger medical manufacturers, and the appropriate technology to manufacture the product, GMD is able to price its product 31% cheaper than the competitors' similar product (Whitney 2007).

Useful sources

There are a few ways to obtain information on prices and price levels in Europe:

- Eurostat - official statistical office of the EU - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu> - by comparing import value and volume, it is possible to get a rough idea of the development of EU import prices from your specific country, and also compared to other countries.
- Price lists of suppliers¹. There are hardly any specific sources for prices of medical devices. Some distributors, however, provide prices of their products in their web shops. Three examples of such web shops showing prices are:
 - Doctorshop - <http://eu.doctorshop.it> - Italian web shop.
 - Esurg - <http://www.esurg.com> - online e-shop for pharmaceutical, medical & surgical supplies (you need to have an account to see prices).
 - Free-med - <http://www.free-med.com> - French distributor with web shop.
 - Medisave - <http://www.medisave.co.uk> - UK based global wholesaler of medical products.
 - MedMarket - <http://www.medmarket.com> - online shop of medical products for private consumers.
 - Van der Lingen Instruments - <http://www.vdlinstruments.nl> - Dutch web shop for medical instruments.

¹ Note that the prices mentioned have to be treated with extreme caution, as they depend on different aspects, such as the specifications, the volumes, and the application for which they are used.