Article published on January 10th 2012 | Business

Procurement of goods and services is a conscious decision taken by the management of public sector organisations. NHS Procurement is by no means an exception to this rule, where purchase decisions involve steps taken to ensure that the best products and services are being procured by the NHS. Simultaneously, it is also the policy of the NHS trusts to provide transparency in the buying process in terms of pricing and other considerations, to ensure that all suppliers are treated equally and equitably and are judged based on the value that they could add to NHS. That precisely is the rationale behind NHS price comparison, with the ultimate objective of driving efficiency in the system, amounting to better value for the consumers of NHS.

NHS price comparison is not a new idea, transparency in pricing has always been professed as a tool in bringing about efficiency. Various industries have tried systems in transparent pricing, which may be seen as being similar to NHS price comparison, and have reaped the associated benefits. Such a system leads to greater transparency as well as to informed buying decisions being made by buyers and consumers. Further, the associated benefit has been that of uniform pricing for products. Without NHS price comparison, it has been observed that there have been large scale differences in the prices of products, as seen among the different trusts making purchase decisions on the same products. Having such price variations across NHS trusts leads to inefficiency in the system and to confusion for the end consumers, apart from loss of value to all stakeholders involved.

There is much more than just technology in bringing out the best value of NHS procurement. Greater clinical engagement, coupled with improved corporate engagement, could produce favourable results that could go well with the principles of NHS price comparison. The concept plays an important role in enabling NHS trusts in studying the market, assessing the suppliers and the impact of pricing on consumers, and in negotiating favourable and reasonable deals with the supplying organisations. The end result is better effectiveness, efficiency and organisational well being.

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Article Keywords:
NHS Products, NHS purchasing, NHS suppliers, NHS price comparison, NHS procurement

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