

The diffusion of medical technology*

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Abstract

The pattern of the spread of medical technology varies a great deal in different countries, and within the same country for different technologies. This fact suggests an interaction of complex factors related to the diffusion of technology and the lack of coherent policies for introduction and evaluation of medical technology in the majority of countries.

In a previous study, we have suggested six factors to be taken into account to formulate an explanatory hypothesis regarding the variation of the spread of medical technology in the international context. These are: (1) regulation mechanisms of each national health system; (2) economic incentives to the service providers; (3) public or private ownership of the premises; (4) number and distribution of specialist doctors; (5) the role of the national industry, and (6) the epidemiology of diseases related with each technology.

To explore these factors, we have instigated a project of investigation. This article is a preliminary analysis related to a case study about the role of incentives in the diffusion of medical technology.

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