



Use of International Pharmaceutical Price Comparison Information

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Objective

Access to a central, independent, updated source of comparative pharmaceutical price information should greatly facilitate procurement of medicines of assured quality for the lowest price.

Method

The *International Drug Price Indicator Guide* provides an indication of pharmaceutical prices on the international market. Updated annually and published by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the *Guide* contains a spectrum of prices from pharmaceutical suppliers, international development organizations, and government agencies. The latest edition of the *Guide* contains prices for more than 900 pharmaceuticals, contraceptives, and vaccines. The *Guide*, in English, French, and Spanish, is available in print, on CD-ROM, and through the MSH Electronic Resource Center (<http://erc.msh.org>).

Results

A 2004 survey of more than 50 users of the *International Drug Price Indicator Guide* found that 68% of them use the *Guide* for comparing prices recently obtained from suppliers and 42% use it to plan their budget or tender. Sixty-four percent of the survey respondents stated that they do not have access to any other source of comparative international price information. Of the survey respondents, 44% said that using the *Guide* has contributed to better acquisition prices or other savings for them, with half saving 11%–30%.

Conclusion

Access to independent comparative price information assists in price negotiations, in locating new supply sources, and in assessing the efficiency of local procurement systems.