Benchmarking healthcare logistics processes: a comparative case study of Danish and US hospitals

Logistics processes in hospitals are vital in the provision of patient care. Improving healthcare logistics processes provides an opportunity for reduced healthcare costs and better support of clinical processes. Hospitals are faced with increasing healthcare costs around the world and improvement initiatives prevalent in manufacturing industries such as lean, business process reengineering and benchmarking have seen an increase in use in healthcare. This study investigates how logistics processes in a hospital can be benchmarked to improve process performance. A comparative case study of the bed logistics process and the pharmaceutical distribution process was conducted at a Danish and a US hospital. The case study results identified decision criteria for designing efficient and effective healthcare logistics processes. The most important decision criteria were related to quality, security of supply and employee engagement. Based on these decision criteria, performance indicators were developed to enable benchmarking of logistics processes in healthcare. The study contributes to the limited literature on healthcare logistics benchmarking. Furthermore, managers in healthcare logistics are provided with a list of decision parameters relevant for designing and benchmarking processes.

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