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THE INFLUENCE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ON MEDICAL EQUIPMENT ADOPTION IN GENERAL PRACTICES

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Abstract

The benefits of the availability and use of medical equipment for medical outcomes are understood by physicians and policymakers alike. However, there is limited understanding of the decision-making processes involved in adopting and using new technologies in health care organisations. Our study focuses on the adoption of medical equipment in Irish general practices which are marked by considerable autonomy in terms of commercial practice and the range of medical services they provide. We examine the adoption of six items of medical equipment taking into account commercial, informational and experiential stimuli. Our analysis is based on primary survey data collected from a sample of 601 general practices in Ireland on practice characteristics and medical equipment use. We use a multivariate Probit to identify commonalities in the determinants of the adoption. Many factors, such as GP and practice characteristics, influence medical equipment adoption. In addition, we find significant and consistent evidence of the influence of learning-by-using effects on the adoption of medical equipment in a general practice setting. Knowledge generated by experiential or applied learning can have commercial, organisational and health care provision benefits in small health care organisations.

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