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Abstract

The research concentrates on public-private partnership within the health sector. The objective is to discover how partnership could be used to create mutual added value between a multinational pharmaceutical company and local university hospitals. The sub-problems of the study are to give implications on the motives for partnership between a pharmaceutical company and a university hospital, as well as on the needs and wants of each party. Moreover, it is attempted to solve what could be achieved through partnership. The methodology of the research comprises of a qualitative case study, for which the data was collected through theme interviews.

The opportunities for partnership between the pharmaceutical industry and university hospitals are improving, as attitudes change towards a more open consideration of public-private partnership. The public health sector is presently seen as too bureaucratic and rigid, and to increase its productivity partnership should be sought. Education and research are most valued within the health sector; they are also two branches where resources are lacking, and pharmaceutical companies could be of assistance. Synergistic value from learning new skills and improving information flow could accrue to both parties, therefore suggesting that the relationship between a pharmaceutical company and a university hospital is keen on evolving into a commercially based partnership with the purpose of cospecialization, as well as learning and internalization.

University hospitals do not possess the business knowledge and the expertise, nor the networks possessed by pharmaceutical companies. These are however needed by the health sector, as can clearly be seen from the lack of employment within the public health sector. Partnership tends to generate resources and develop skills, and hence could be used to meet these needs of pharmaceutical companies, as well as of the university hospitals. Meanwhile, university hospitals could concentrate on their core skill of nursing patients, as the extra operations could be outsourced to private partners. Needs and wants of the health sector were seen as overlapping and converging.

Partnership would benefit the pharmaceutical industry commercially and information-wise, while the public sector could be developed into a more flexible organization with adequate research and human resources. As a result, patients could be provided with more efficient service. In order to realize these benefits, an open discourse between the two parties should be attempted for the understanding of the needs of each party, as well as to discover possible problems within the health sector that could be solved through partnership.

Key words	Partnership, health sector, university hospital, pharmaceutical company
Further information	