Disposables Could Help Defeat HAIs

Growing concerns about hospital acquired infections (HAIs) are driving the demand for disposable needles and syringes, according to a new report by healthcare experts GBI Research. It states that demand for disposable hospital supplies is growing across the world, as they reduce risks of cross-contamination. The globally swelling diabetes population, and increasing numbers with access to state healthcare coverage mean that more and more patients will face the risk of infection through hospital contagion.

State healthcare systems are being pressured to impose active measures against HAIs, and their prevention, control and management have fueled the demand for single-use products. Governments in developed countries are encouraging the use of disposable hospital supplies in order to reduce healthcare costs incurred in treating HAIs. This demand will increase as hospitals, outpatient care centers and other healthcare facilities adopt stricter infection prevention safeguards to meet stronger standards. For example, the European market for disposable surgical gowns and drapes has witnessed a steady growth in the past few years due to the enforcement of high standards of infection control based on the new European Union Medical Device Directive and EU regulations.

In the U.S., the disposable hospital supplies market will be driven by an expanding patient pool and the expansion of health insurance coverage by the Affordable Care Act of 2010, which had resulted in an increased number of people seeking medical care. The increasing incidences of HAIs are a cause of concern for patients, the healthcare industry and governments. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 5–10 percent of patients admitted to acute care hospitals in developed countries acquire an infection. HAIs are reported to cause around 80,000 deaths annually in the U.S. and 5,000 deaths each year in the UK. Non-fatal infections also result in increased healthcare expenditure, due to prolonged hospital stays for patients. With the overall annual direct cost of HAIs to U.S. hospitals ranging between $28 and $34 billion, the use of medical disposables is well worth the price.

The use of disposable hospital supplies such as single-use syringes, procedure kits and trays, gloves, drapes and gowns has seen steady growth in recent years. Revenue in the disposable hospital supplies market grew at a rate of 6 percent between 2004–2011, and is expected to grow at a rate of 6.4 percent until 2018, reaching $15.4 billion.

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