



► Medical Equipment and Supplies

Important market facts

- In 1986 the French market for medical equipment and supplies was estimated at around \$2 billion. The turnover, with the exception of laboratory equipment, amounted to \$1.9 billion.
- The French biomedical industry manufactures the following categories of products:
 - emergency and first aid;
 - diagnostic;
 - therapeutic;
 - prosthetic;
 - orthopedic;
 - rehabilitation;
 - products for specialized use;
 - hygiene;
 - educational;
 - computers;
 - specialized equipment and furniture;
 - radiology.
- In 1985, 13.4 per cent of medical supplies were used in households.
- The French biomedical industry employs about 20 000 people in some 350 companies.

- The industry is based mainly in and around Paris, and to a lesser extent in the Rhône-Alpes region (Lyon) and the southwest (Toulouse).
- About 80 per cent of the manufacturers belong to SNITEM, the national trade union for the medical technology industry.
- For the safety of both consumers and patients, certain groups of medical materials must be approved by the Ministry of Health.
- Standards, which must be respected in public hospitals, are certified by AFNOR, a French certification agency.

Market trends

- The French market is open to foreign products and there are virtually no marketing obstacles except technical restrictions for safety reasons.
- Foreign companies operating in France generally have well-organized commercial networks and after-sales services.
- The central purchasing office, UGAP, is used by many public hospitals that submit tenders. Competition for both materials and consumables is high.

Canadian imports

- Foreign trade with Canada is in the developing stages: Canada imports only 3 per cent of its market (\$1 billion) from France. Total Canadian sales to all European Economic Community countries amount to only \$33 million.

Recommendations for Canadian exporters

- Since some market areas have not been exploited by French manufacturers, there are potential markets for exporters, especially for new medical techniques. This situation makes it relatively easy to introduce new products.
- Laser techniques, endoscopy associated with microsurgery, and artificial limbs made with new materials are becoming increasingly important in this market.