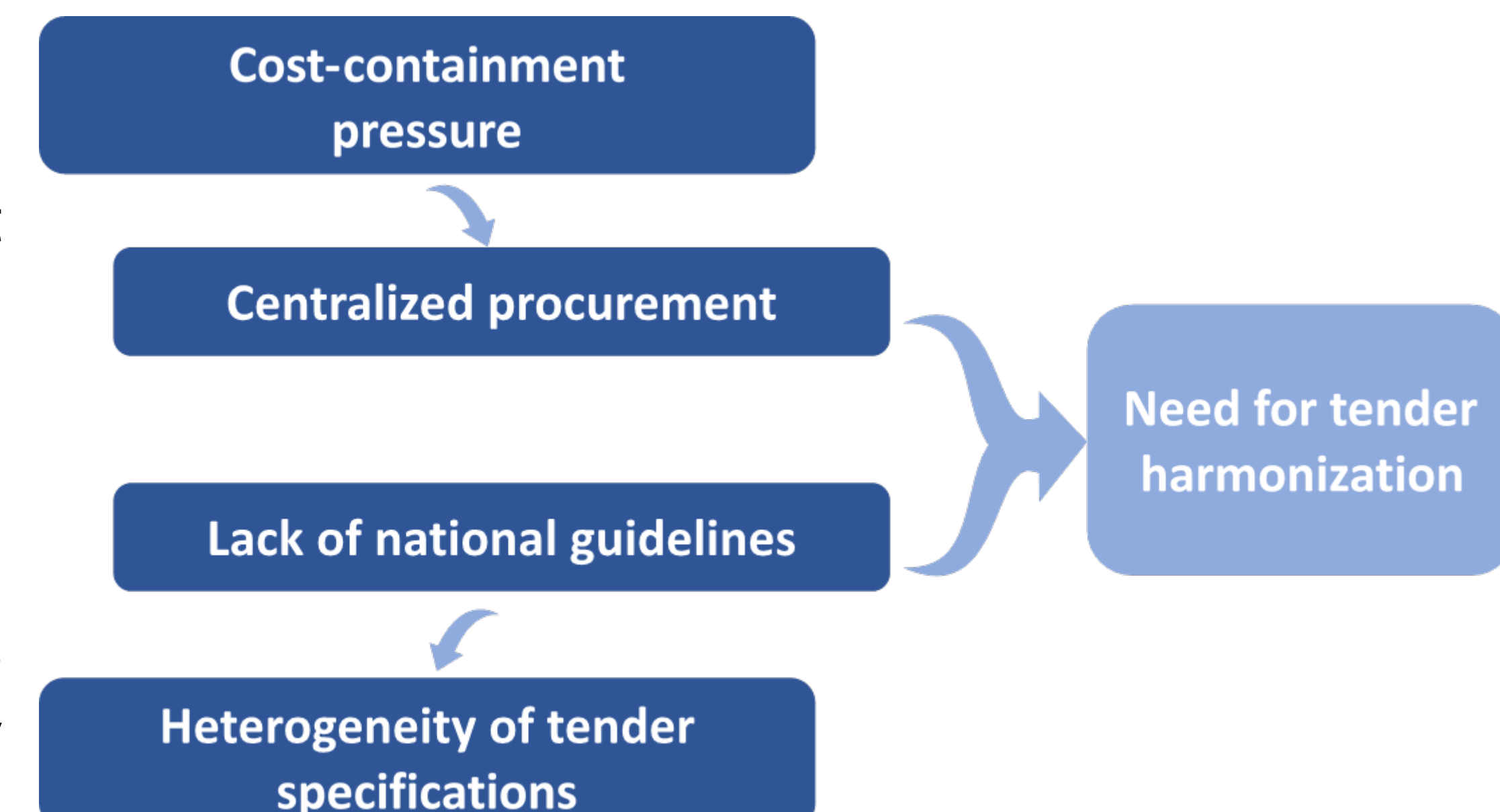


CENTRALIZED PROCUREMENT OF MEDICAL DEVICES IN ITALY: A METHODOLOGY TOWARDS STANDARDIZED TENDER DOSSIER

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BACKGROUND

- ❖ From the second half of 1990s onwards, Italy has undergone an important process of containment and rationalisation of public expenses, in particular for the healthcare sector.
- ❖ Centralized procurement is an effective cost-containment approach for healthcare systems because it allows hospitals to bargain for lower prices.
- ❖ Profound re-organization of Italian public procurement → creation of centralized national and regional purchasing authorities in charge of buying healthcare products, including Medical Devices (MDs).
- ❖ In 2015, MDs represented the 32.2% of total public expenditures for healthcare products.
- ❖ Despite the ongoing trend towards centralized procurement for MDs, the lack of national guidelines translates into heterogeneity of tender specifications and thus lack of comparability and governability of MDs purchasing processes.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Develop a standardized methodology for comparative analysis of existing tender documents for MDs procurement.
- ❖ Test the methodology to a specific category of MDs.
- ❖ Draft a standardized tender dossier (ongoing).

Final aim: overcome the current fragmentation in public procurement processes and documents.

METHOD

The case study is focused on sanitary gloves. Phases of the research:

- ❖ Systematic search and collection of documents related to all awarded, expired and ongoing Italian regional tenders from 2015 onwards. Sources: centralized purchasing authorities websites; database of Italian public tenders.
- ❖ Development of an ad hoc extraction protocol of relevant information at dossier and lot level.
- ❖ Comprehensive analyses at both dossier and lot level.

RESULTS

13 regional tenders implemented in 12 out of the 21 Italian Regions from 2015 to 2017 → gradual uptake of centralized procurement.

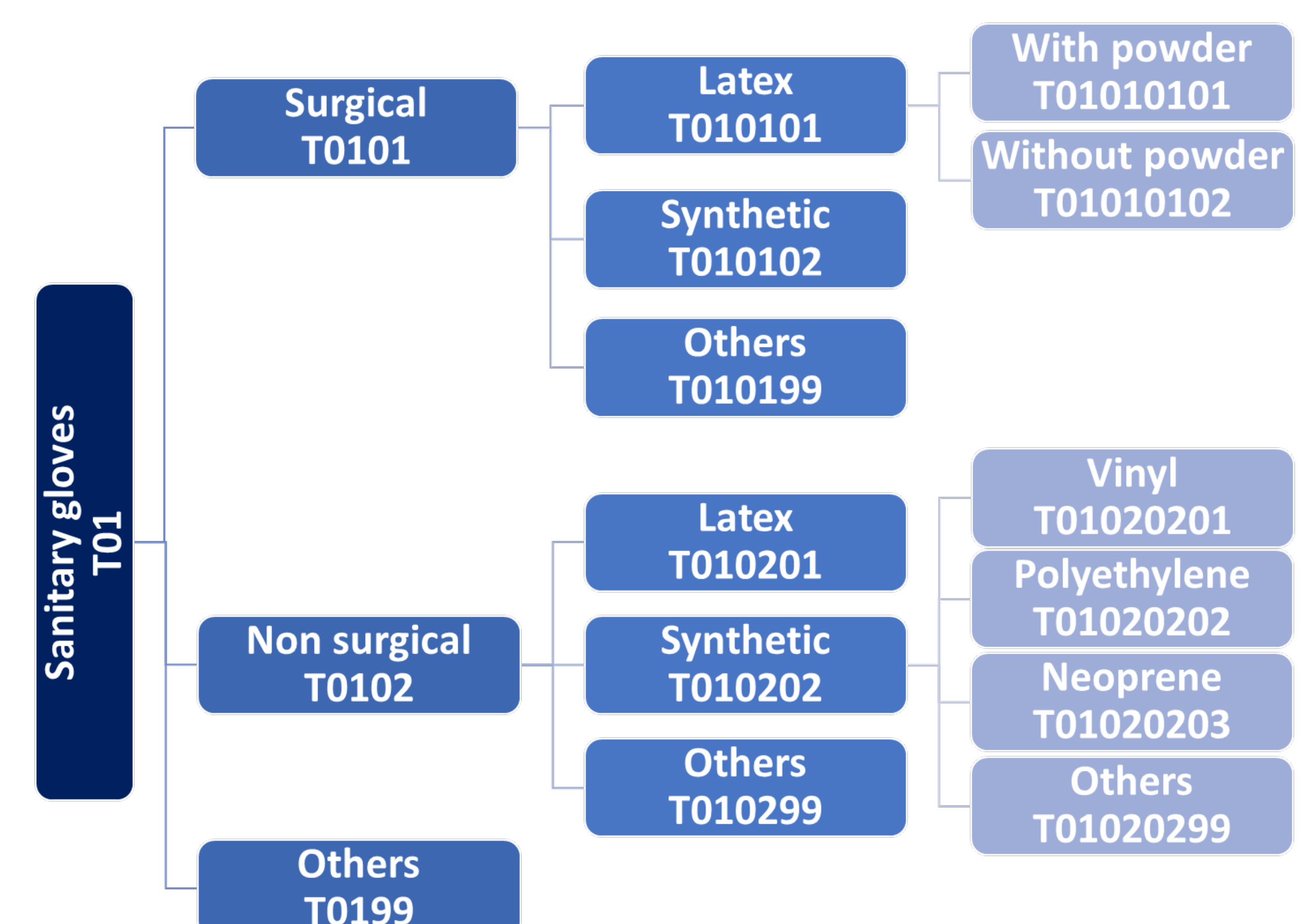
Main results at tender level:

- ❖ Only 4 tenders (31%) successfully awarded, one ongoing → need to improve both efficiency and speed of the awarding process.
- ❖ The average auction price (€12.8 mln; SD=€6.6 mln) is generally higher in regional tenders than in local tenders → possibility to obtain important economies of scale.
- ❖ The number of lots vary substantially among tenders (min=1; mean=17; max=46) → centralized procurement should rationalise the purchase of MDs (decrease lots number with respect to local tenders).
- ❖ Structure, contents and technical terminology of the retrieved documents are highly heterogeneous among the purchasing authorities → need to align tender production among centralized authorities for public procurement.
- ❖ Substantial difference in awarding criteria of lots, with quality weighting varying between 30 and 60% → more weight should be given to qualitative and technical aspects, especially for MDs characterized by high technological complexity. Ultimately, this will be ensured by the most recent version of the Italian New Public Procurement Code (quality weight ≥70%).

Main results at lot level:

- ❖ The characteristics used in lot description are usually more detailed than those specified in the Italian National Classification System (CND) of MDs (Figure 1) → the terminal levels of the CND include very heterogeneous devices (too much heterogeneity?).
- ❖ MDs in the same terminal level of the CND were in some cases awarded at very different unit prices.

Figure 1: National Classification System of sanitary gloves



Are the levels of the CND sufficient to precisely categorise MDs?

DISCUSSION

Recommendations

- ❖ Harmonization of tender specifications and criteria among centralized purchasing authorities.
- ❖ Improvement of the importance of technical aspects and quality in awarding public contracts. Better specification of quality criteria.
- ❖ Improvement of the adherence between classification system and characteristics of the purchased MDs.

Contributions of the analysis

- ❖ Drafting of national guidelines for procurement of MDs in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Health (MoH) and Regions.
- ❖ Ongoing drafting of a standardized tender dossier (for sanitary gloves) for all Italian contracting authorities.
- ❖ Revision of the CND by the Italian MoH.