This is an incident which occurred some time ago. I was approached by my colleague for some assistance. A new Neurosurgery medical device had been purchased and was about to be introduced in the system. The item was to be mechanically washed and steam sterilised. My colleague asked me to confirm that this was fine.

I asked for a copy of the Manufacturer's instructions. On receiving the instructions, I realised that there were a couple of issues. The Manufacturer had recommended that Thermal disinfection be carried out at 90°C and that steam sterilisation be carried out at 132°C to 134°C. Unfortunately, our department employed temperatures of 93°C for the thermal disinfection and 134°C to 137°C for steam sterilisation. I got in touch with our Neurosurgery theatres and explained to them the problem. We arranged to meet up with the Manufacturer's agent in New Zealand.

I explained to the supplier that this medical could not be safely reprocessed by my department due to the fact that our processes were not in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. The supplier sympathised with my problem but insisted that he could do nothing to help us out. They had already supplied the manufacturer's instructions before the purchase had been authorised. Someone from out hospital had missed checking the reprocessing instructions. It was not surprising as the manufacturer's instruction was a 172 page document. Now, we had a situation. We had purchased a medical device and reprocessing was not going to be easy. The supplier refused to co-operate.

This was not the first time that we had found ourselves in such a position. I realised that some of my colleagues were finding this very stressful. We had to find a way out. I was aware that there was an ISO (ISO 17764) standard specifically meant to avoid such problems. Based on this standard, we designed a form and named it "Procurement Checklist".

The Procurement Checklist was very important because it shifted the onus of checking manufacturer's instructions from the Hospital to a shared responsibility of the Hospital and the supplier. This form was discussed in the management meeting within our department. Once authorised by the manager, the form was circulated amongst the various theatre managers as well as Health Alliance. This was further endorsed by all and the form was officially rolled out.

Since the time this form has been rolled out, we have had minimum issues with new purchases. I take intense satisfaction with the resolution of this problem.