Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

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Deployment of part-time porters to Radiology Department and Central Endoscopy Unit during peak hours to speed up patients flow and to reduce staff turnover rate - a successful case of Central Portering & Messengerial Services

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Introduction
Central Portering and Messengerial Services (CPMS) provides patient portering and messengerial services to all wards and most clinical departments including the Radiology Department and Central Endoscopy Unit (CEU) in PMH. The services are delivered using the corporate Automatic Dispatching System (ADS). Users are required to place their orders via the ADS which will auto-assign the most appropriate porters through pagers to handle the requests. Over the past year, the workload of CPMS had increased by 41%. Apart from the increasing workload, manpower shortage (due to recruitment difficulties) is a major problem faced by the Team in maintaining quality service. The service is seriously affected in certain timeslots when there are clustering of patients (10:00 – 1200 and 14:00 – 16:00), usually after doctors’ round for patients receiving X-ray and CEU services, hence resulting in long waiting time for forwarding and returning trips to/from wards and these two departments.

Objectives
1. To fill up the existing vacancies of OpAllIB as soon as possible, and to maintain a stable manpower. 2. To speed up patients flow between wards and Radiology/ CEU.

Methodology
To ease off the congestion in the busy timeslots (09:00 – 12:00 & 14:00 – 17:00), part-time OpAllIBs were employed (by holding against full-time OpAllIB vacancies) to run the portering service in these periods wef January 2014. There was a group of females in the market who would like to look for part-time jobs so that they could earn money and look after their family at the same time. The recruitment of part-time OpAllIBs proved to be easier than the employment of full-time staff. These part-time
staff were scheduled to work in periods that covered the peak hours of the portering service. This operation model was further enhanced in May 2014. In order to speed up the patients flow further and to simplify the workflow/ travelling route for new staff so as to increase staff retention rate, the part-timers were deployed to Radiology and CEU to handle specifically the forwarding and returning trips between Radiology/CEU and wards with effective from May 2014. All requests for portering services used to be placed vide ADS system. The system would then dispatch the orders according to their priority status and the porters' location. Under the new operation model, orders for Radiology and CEU were no longer dispatched by the ADS system. Instead, they were assigned by an on-site staff according to the patients' priorities. A separate record was made to register the in/out time of patients portering. The duty supervisor would conduct regular surprise checks and review the service with concerned users on a regular basis.

**Result**
Since the deployment of new part-time porters to Radiology and CEU from May 2014, the average waiting time for patients portering to/from Radiology/ CEU and wards had been reduced from 22 mins to 20 mins (ie. 18.9%) for each patient. More importantly, this trial proved to be effective in retaining new part-time staff. With a simpler workflow/ travelling route, the new staff could adapt much more easily to their work environment. The staff turnover rate had dropped significantly from 15.92% to 7.57% which had saved much administrative work to recruit and train new staff.