Lean management: Streamlining of Portering service in a local hospital for efficiency gain

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Introduction
The waiting time for portering, to and from radiology, for in-patient has been excessive. This would affect the turnaround time and hence the overall length of stay of patient.

Objectives
We apply lean management to tackle the issue, with the help of six sigma institute, Hong Kong

Methodology
1. The Lean processes were applied: Identification of background problem, Problem analysis, Target condition, Implementation plan, follow up. 2. The following tools were applied: Value stream mapping & time observation sheet. 3. The data were collected at a busy Monday in December 2014 (pre-lean) and January 2015 (post-lean). 4. Interventions includes streamlining the workflow and delegation of in charge person for portering arrangement. The physical layout of the waiting area has been altered minimally.

Result
1. Significant reduction in the waiting time was seen after the application of lean management. 2. The total lead time dropped from 173 to 55 mins. This is translated as a waste reduction of 116 mins and 71.6% of waste reduction. The gain in process efficiency is 156.3%. 3. The saved extra stay of patient, could in theory, reduced the length of stay and amounts to over 800 patient bed days per year.