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Submitting author: Ms Pui Ha LAM

Post title: Advanced Practice Nurse, PWH, NTEC

An Improvement Program to Streamline the Workflow of Handling Laboratory Reports in GOPC

Lam PH(1), Chiu CWH(1), Leung WK(1), Cheuk C(1), Fung WM(1), Leung MKW(1), Hui EMT(1), Hui E(1), Li PKT(1)

(1)Lek Yuen General Out-patient Clinic, Prince of Wales Hospital

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Introduction

Laboratory investigation results provide crucial information for patient management. Timely screening of laboratory reports benefit patient management in early detection, diagnose of disease and appropriate treatment to patients. Lek Yuen General Out-patient Clinic (LYGOPC) is well known the busiest clinic in New Territories East Cluster (NTEC). There are over 30,000 attendances per year and more than 1,800 laboratory reports received every day. Other than medical staff, it involves several disciplines of staff including nursing, clerical and supporting staff to handle the laboratory reports. The man hour spent in processing the laboratory investigation is 417 minutes in average which is equivalent to 7 hours. Long consuming process time and complicated workflow are prone to producing errors. In order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of handling laboratory reports, the workflow was streamlined to reduce the processing time and to provide timely delivery of laboratory reports to medical staff.

Objectives

To streamline the workflow of handling laboratory reports
To reduce the processing time
To reduce the risk of mishandling of laboratory reports in the long run

Methodology

Lean management approach was adopted in streamlining the workflow. Situation analysis was done to measure the processing time from the collection of laboratory reports from the printers of Clinical Management System (CMS) to the re-collection of the screened laboratory reports from doctors. Fishbone analysis was employed to investigate the cause of wastage. The processing time and number of staff involved before and after the improvement program were compared for evaluation.

Result

An average total consuming time in the whole process from reports collection to reports screened improved from 417 minutes to 274 minutes per day. The total processing time was lowered by 34.3%. The efficiency process percentage was

significantly increased from 64.5 % to 92.7%. Manpower saved from 4 to 2.
Conclusions: The improvement program in streamlining the workflow of handling laboratory reports was successful in eliminating non-valued added process time such that the efficiency was improved significantly.