

New Territories West Cluster



Satisfaction improvement by evaluation of patient's journey at ambulatory endoscopy service

Lai L¹, Chan C², Cheung YL², Ho KL², To KY², Lam CS¹

¹Department of Medicine and Geriatrics, ²Ambulatory Service Center, Pok Oi Hospital, New Territories West Cluster.

INTRODUCTION

Waiting at ambulatory service and clinic is a common and causes complaints and stress to both patients and health care workers. It would also worsen the quality of the service.

OBJECTIVES

The time spent waiting at an ambulatory service and patients' satisfaction may be improved with lean methodology

METHODS

The Endoscopy unit of Pok Oi Hospital was responsible for the out-patient upper endoscopy services of the NTWC. We evaluated the patient's journey attending the out patient endoscopy with lean methodology and plan - do - check - act cycle. A value stream map was drawn and various bottlenecks of the process were identified. We then made changes to the workflow and the appointment system and performed a reevaluation. The performance of the system was constantly reviewed in the seasonal meeting.

Figure 1a Waiting area before implementation



Figure 1b: Before implementation, waiting area crowded with clients.

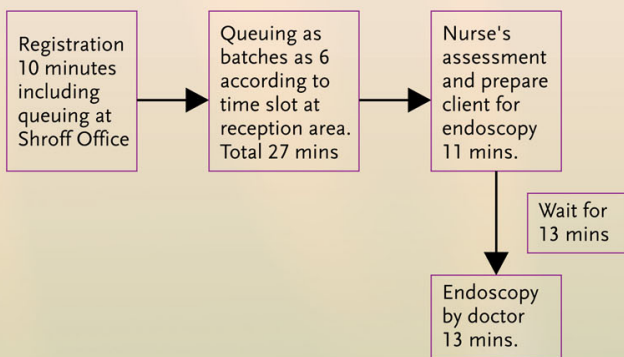


Figure 2: After implementation, fewer people needs to wait.

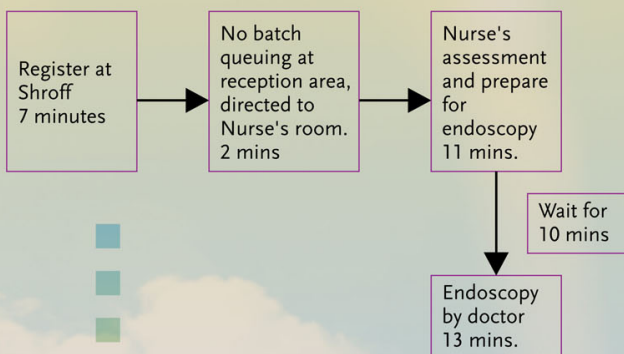


Figure 3: Workflow of the endoscopy

Before implementation



After implementation



RESULTS

About 5000 upper endoscopies were performed in the year of 2009. We performed the baseline evaluation in November 2008. The median time taken from entry to the hospital to the beginning of the endoscope was 61 minutes. The bottleneck identified were the doctor performing the endoscopy (mean duration 13 minutes), time spent waiting for the nurse's assessment and queuing at the shroff.

We then adjusted the time slot system, simplified the nurse's assessment procedure and avoided the peak hours of the shroff work. The second evaluation (January 2010) showed that the median time taken from entry to the endoscope time shortened to 30 minutes ($p < 0.05$). The patient's satisfaction score rose from the average of 7.7 to 8.6 ($p < 0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS

Patient's time spent on waiting in the ambulatory service can be improved with lean methodology, with corresponding improvement of patient's satisfaction.