



KOWLOON WEST CLUSTER



東華三院黃大仙醫院
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals
Wong Tai Sin Hospital



Managing Risks on Diagnosis from Laboratory Testing

WONG CK^{1,2}, CHOI CM^{1,3}, CHAN CK^{1,3}

¹Administrative Services Division,

²TWGHs Wong Tai Sin Hospital, ³Kwong Wah Hospital / TWGHs Wong Tai Sin Hospital

Introduction

Laboratory testing is an important tool for clinical diagnosis and treatment. Throughout the complicated processes of laboratory testing from ordering the right test, identifying the right patient, collecting and transporting the specimen timely, performing right tests for analysis and data accurately being entered to reach the right clinician to prescribe treatment, the problem of laboratory test results not being interpreted for appropriate treatment is observed.

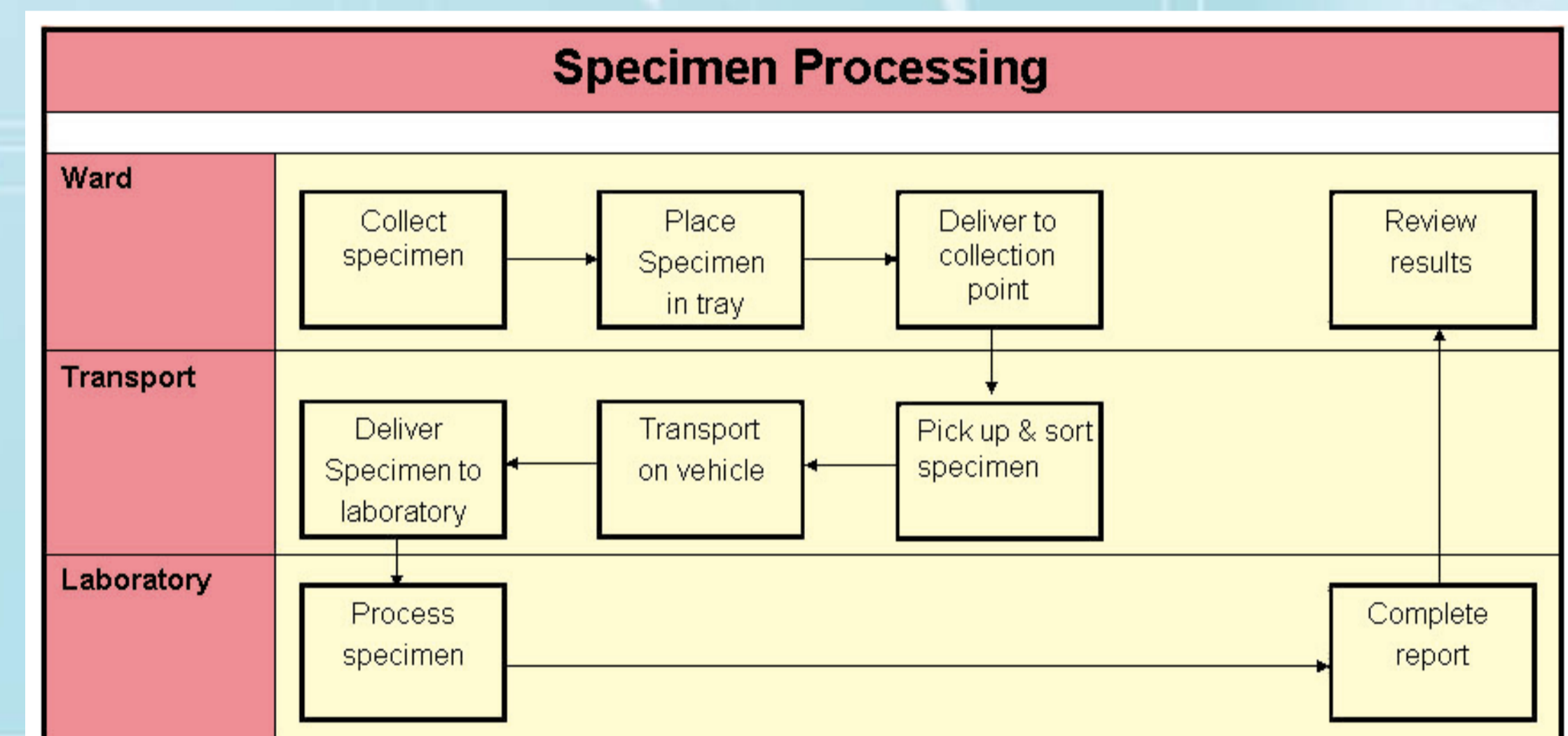
Methodology

The process of specimen delivery from start point (i.e. ward) to end point (i.e. laboratory) was reviewed among parties involved, including ward management, administrative services and pathology department. Understanding was obtained on the estimated time required for generation of laboratory results. Despite improvement in the system, human errors in the delivery process could not be eliminated. Response plans were developed to enable timely alert of suspected loss or delay and trigger for search procedures so that test results would be available as quick as possible. With clear communication among the parties involved on swift response, frontline staff were facilitated to manage incidents more promptly and effectively.

End-to-End Specimen Flow



One of the known risks is delay or loss during delivery of specimens. Despite preventive measures in place, human error is unavoidable and the risk exists. Although the likelihood of specimen delay or missing is low, the consequence is serious when there is delay in patient treatment which may induce adverse impact to patient safety and benefits. At TWGHs Wong Tai Sin Hospital, risks were minimized through enhanced monitoring and response.



Objective

Quality and safety are two fundamental parameters in health care delivery. Risks exist in every process and continuous risk identification and assessment is essential in developing appropriate risk management plan. With monitoring on trends and analysis of reported incidents, walk-through on the specimen handling was completed with an aim to proactively manage anticipated risks associated with delivery of specimens to improve patient safety and clinical outcomes.

Benefits

A just in time tracing mechanism on the whereabouts of specimens sent for laboratory testing enabled problem identification at an early stage. Immediate intervention like searching of the suspected missing item provided a better chance of recovery from loss and helped to minimize discomfort to patients resulting from re-take of specimens. More importantly, when a specimen sent out did not reach a laboratory for the prescribed test at specified time, clinicians would be given feedback timely for decision making on appropriate management on patient care. This control mechanism served as a risk mitigation measure to improve patient safety when the risk could not be eliminated. Quality of care given could be assured.

Conclusion

Better understanding on the process on specimen handling and laboratory testing among key stakeholders facilitate timely activation of response plan when the desired outcomes are not achieved.

九龍西醫醫院聯網