



Singapore Healthcare Management 2018

# No-Show Showdown: Reducing default rate for Occupational Therapy initial assessment appointments



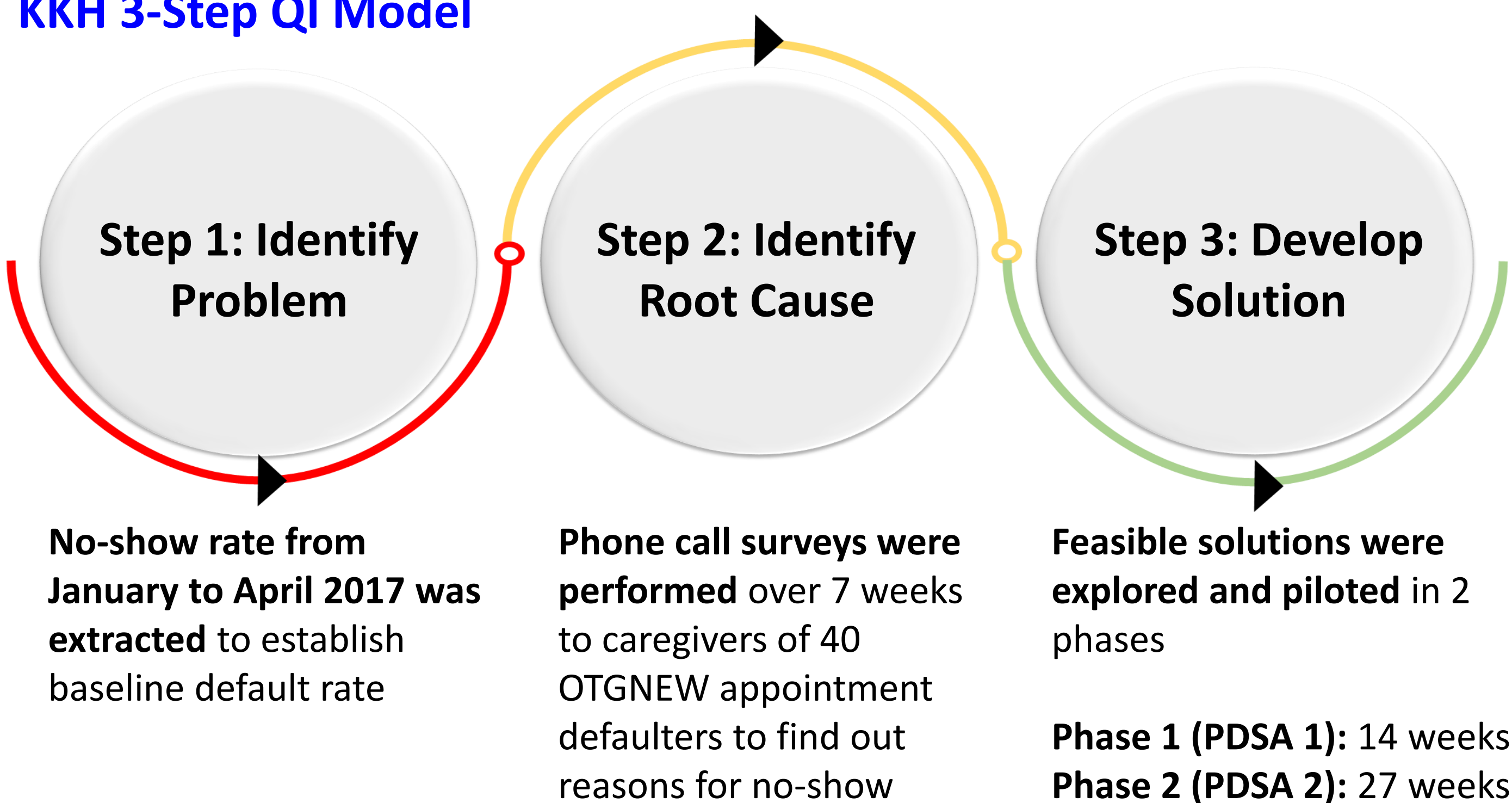
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 (1), (2), (3) Occupational Therapy Service, Rehabilitation Centre  
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## Introduction

Paediatric patients referred for outpatient Occupational Therapy services are seen in designated clinics (OTGNEW) for an initial assessment. OTGNEW clinics are delivered three times a week by two different therapists concurrently. Each clinic consists of two to three 75-minute sessions. Caregivers of patients would receive an appointment reminder via the Short Messaging System (SMS) five days before the date of appointment.

## Methodology

### KKH 3-Step QI Model



Default appointment rate was plotted on run chart and results of PDSA 1 and 2 were compared to baseline

## Step 1: Identify Problem

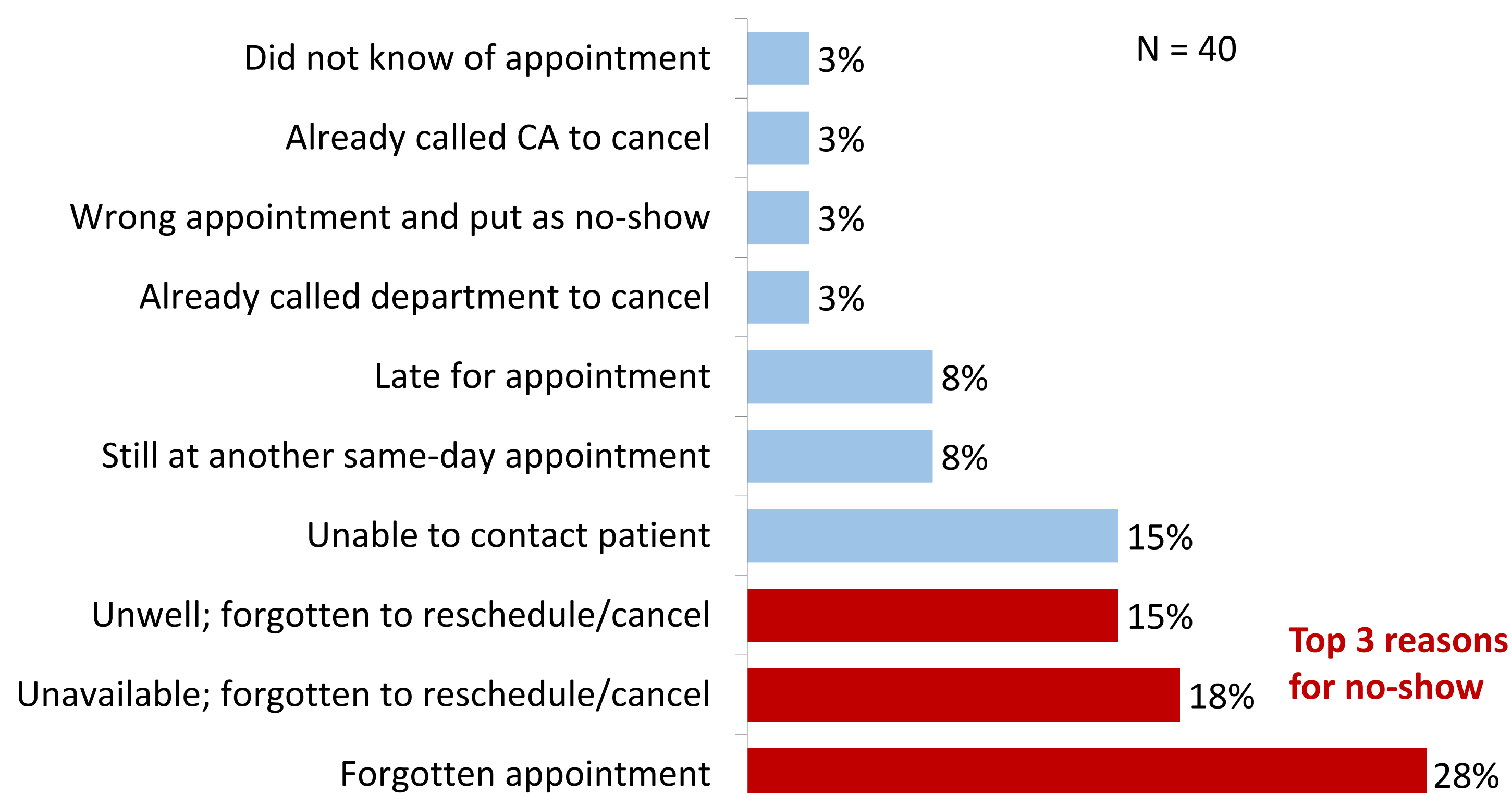
Therapists running these clinics have observed high appointment default rates. This results in a huge waste of man-hour (because of the long session) and reduced productivity for the therapists. High default rate also results in poor utilisation of the OTGNEW sessions and this increases the patient's waiting time for their appointments.

## Aim

This project aims to significantly reduce the OTGNEW default rate.

## Step 2: Identify Root Cause

### Reasons patients did not turn up



## Step 3: Develop Solution

### PDSA 1: Trial of customised SMS appointment reminder (5 days before appointment date)

KKH reminds [redacted] of Rehab Appt on WEDNESDAY/21-Dec-2016, 10:00 AM at CHILDREN'S TOWER BASEMENT 1. Please be punctual for your appointment. If you are more than 15 minutes late for your scheduled appt, your session may be for a shorter duration, postponed or rescheduled. We seek your kind understanding in this matter.

View your appointment online at [www.singhealth.com.sg/appointments](http://www.singhealth.com.sg/appointments)

For assistance, please call 62944050. Thank you.



- Use emotional appeal as behavioural nudge to make them be mindful to cancel or reschedule in event of unexpected situation
- Simplified, clear and user-friendly information and instruction on how to reschedule or cancel appointments

Dear JANE DOE,

You have an appt on MONDAY/28-DEC-2016, 09:30 AM at KKH Rehab Centre, Children's Tower Basement 1.

To RESCHEDULE, please call 62944050.

To CANCEL, please reply 9.

\*\*By rescheduling your appt when you are unable to attend, you have given it up to someone who needs it urgently.\*\*

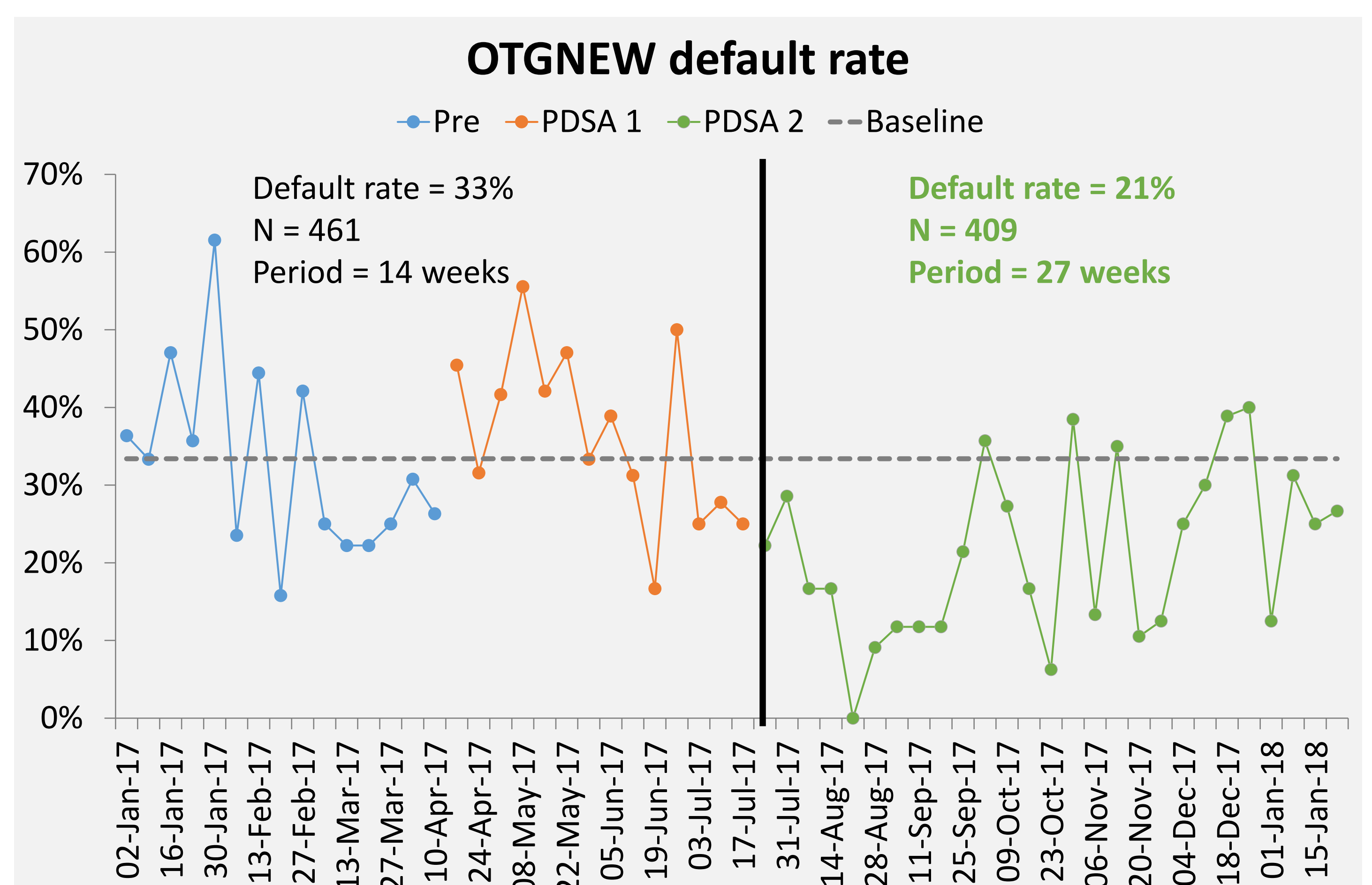
Thank you.

**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

### PDSA 2: Trial of phone call reminder by therapist (3 days before appointment date) on top of PDSA 1

## Results



PDSA 2 has resulted in significant ( $p < 0.001^*$ ) and sustainable reduction in the OTGNEW default rate.

\*Z-test for 2 proportions

## Conclusion

- The use of a customised SMS appointment reminder with a behavioural nudge, along with simplified, clear and user-friendly information and instructions to reschedule or cancel, was not effective in reducing appointment defaults.
- Appointment default rate was successfully and sustainably reduced from 33% to 21% with the incorporation of reminder phone calls to the caregivers. Henceforth, this had been incorporated into the OTGNEW clinic workflow to ensure sustainability.
- The new process has also resulted in annualised reduction of 120 wasted man-hour.