



Improve New Case Waiting Time to Appointment for hearing aid at Hearing Centre

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Background

Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOC) Operations constantly monitors Waiting Time to Appointment (WTA) which serves as an indicator for respective clinic's performance and patients' experience. The WTA for patients obtaining hearing aids have been increasing over time. These hearing aids help to improve patients' daily communications and their quality of life. As such, SOC Operations and the audiologists came together to implement timely interventions.

How we do it?

The team came together for discussion and brainstorm possible solution(s)

Evaluated on possible solutions, finalized based on feasibility and implemented finalized methods

Created a TigerConnect group chat for daily communication

Monthly meetings to stay updated of WTA, reviewed effectiveness of implemented solutions and did further forward planning

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REVIEW CURRENT RESOURCE SETUP

- Conversion of un-utilized follow-up (FP) slots and other audiology related services appointment slots to new case (NC) hearing aid slots

15/05/2018 Tue AUDIOLOGIST - CONRAD [NDR]		
Normal	OverBooked	Total
3	0	3
First	Followup	Total
1	0	1
First	Followup	Total
0	2	2
First	Followup	Total
0	0	0

15/05/2018 Tue AUDIOLOGIST - CONRAD [NDR]		
Normal	OverBooked	Total
3	0	3
First	Followup	Total
3	0	3
First	Followup	Total
0	0	0
First	Followup	Total
0	0	0

Results:

- WTA for new case hearing aid patients improved from 18 months to 2 months
- Converted usual 90mins appointment slots to 60mins hence increasing number of new case hearing aid appointment slots by 100% - from 48 to 100 slots

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OPTIMISING RESOURCE UTILISATION

- Reminding and confirming patients' attendance to avoid last minute cancellations
 - Two SMS reminders – 2 weeks and 1 week prior to appointment date
 - Phone calls

SGH reminds TNG of appt to see AUDIOLOGIST for HEARING AID TRIAL on TUESDAY/06-Jun-2017 at 02:00 PM. HEARING CENTRE, Block 3, Basement 1. To cancel this appt, please reply "9" to this SMS.

Results:

- Able to shift existing patients who have been waiting in the system to these free-up slots hence shortened their waiting time

Solutions and Results

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TRIAGING PATIENTS

- Giving priority access to patients who urgently needs the hearing aid



Results:

- 20% of patients (approx. 220) were given priority to earlier appointments (within 3 months) due to their hearing needs and medical condition

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COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

- Collaboration with Changi General Hospital (CGH) ENT and The Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) by referring some of our patients to them for purchase of hearing aids.

Hearing Aid Referral to CGH / SADeaf

Patient's Name: _____
NIC: _____
Date of referral: _____
Doctor's Name Stamp & Signature: _____

Part I - ENT Doctor to assess:
 Patient has stable hearing loss (non-progressive, symmetrical hearing loss and doesn't require surgical intervention e.g. presbycusis)

Part II - ENT Hearing Centre counter staff to verify and tick:
 60 years old and above, Singaporean
 Has Blue CHAS (Valid till: _____)
 Does not have Blue CHAS
 Has Blue CHAS but decline to be referred to CGH/SADeaf

Part III - Consent for Referral of Subsidized patients to other institutions for Hearing Aid Evaluation

1. I agree to be referred to following institution for Hearing Aid Subsidy through Senior Mobility Funds (SMF):
 Changi General Hospital (CGH)
 Singapore Association for Deaf (SADeaf)

2. I agree to co-pay 10% should I qualify for Hearing Aid subsidy through SMF.

3. After hearing aid purchase, I agree to follow up only at the above institution for hearing aid fitting and follow-ups.

Patient's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part IV - ENT Hearing Centre counter staff to do if patient is referred to CGH: Please call CGH at 6850 3333 to make the appointment.
Hearing Aid Evaluation appointment details at CGH: _____

Results:

- 15% of new case patients (approx. 181) were referred to CGH / SADeaf which has shorter WTA of 1 – 2 months (as of Dec 2017)

Conclusion

It is essential to consistently leverage on available data to improve clinic performance and patients' experience. The collaboration from all stakeholders is critical to ensure resources are effectively optimized and meet the desired outcome. The improvement measures benefitted both the patients and the clinic in two ways. Firstly, there is a significant improvement in the WTA for hearing devices hence improving patients' experience. Secondly, a reduction in the default rate and hence, resources are better utilized.