TO IMPROVE AND REDUCE OUT-OF-STOCK SITUATIONS IN SENGKANG GENERAL HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT PHARMACY

INTRODUCTION
Inventory management is essential to ensure drug sufficiency for the undisrupted provision of drugs to patients. In Outpatient Pharmacy at Sengkang General Hospital (SKH), the par level system which bases on the past monthly movement and estimation is sometimes unreliable. This leads to frequent occurrence of insufficient stocks situations, when there is an increase in demand for the medication. Warehouse Management System (WMS) is utilized for weekly ordering and triggers store to top up in low stock situations.

OBJECTIVES
• Appoint a Pharmacy Technician in-charge for each gondola to monitor the inventory of items under their care
• To assist the inventory team in monitoring stock levels effectively
• Overall, reduce out-of-stock situation

METHODOLOGY
A Fish Bone Diagram was conducted to identify the reasons for out-of-stock situations in pharmacy, identifying the root causes. After which, independent sample t-test was used to compare mean average number of out-of-stock items over the 30 days before and after implementation of the new workflow.

RESULTS
A total of 34 out-of-stock items were identified in April 2018 (pre-implementation) and 15 items were identified in August 2018 (post-implementation).

DISCUSSION
In the past, Inventory Team was only informed when stocks were running out or at critically low levels. This resulted in Inventory Team having to make multiple ad-hoc trips to Pharmacy Store every day.

Creation of this gondolas in-charge role allowed earlier triggers of inventory stock out situations and facilitated planned ordering from Pharmacy Store. The collaboration between gondolas in-charge and Inventory Team was shown to significantly reduce insufficient stock situations. Inventory Team would have ample time to liaise with the procurement team to bring in stocks, to request for urgent deliveries or to borrow from other institutions before stocks deplete completely.

CONCLUSION
This study has proven that the new workflow can help to reduce out-of-stock situations and allow Pharmacy Store to cope with the fluctuation of demand. It is important to have enough stocks in the pharmacy to reduce patients’ waiting time, improve efficiency and patients’ satisfaction.