Reducing Patient Waiting Time at Dietetics Outpatient Clinic

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INTRODUCTION
Waiting time has a significant impact on overall patient’s experience and affects perceptions of quality and satisfaction. Long waiting time contributes to high default rate, resulting in disruption of clinic schedules and manpower planning.

GOAL
To improve the percentage of outpatients seen by a dietitian within 30 minutes of the scheduled appointment time from 91% to 97%.

METHODOLOGY
1. Problem analysis using Run Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month and Year</th>
<th>Total number of patients who waited &gt;30 mins</th>
<th>Average (Number of patients who waited &gt;30 mins per month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2016 – March 2017</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May – December 2017</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – December 2018</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures:
- Figure 1: Percentage of Dietetics Outpatient Clinic wait time within 30 mins from scheduled appointment time
- Figure 2: Overall Dietetics Outpatient wait time of more than 30 mins
- Figure 3: Total Dietetics Outpatient load for past 3 years
- Figure 4: Overall Dietetics Outpatient Satisfaction Score for past 2 years

2. Root causes identified by Fishbone diagram

3. Targeted intervention towards reducing patients’ waiting time

CONCLUSION
- Waiting time has improved and patient experience is positive.
- A workflow has been successfully integrated into daily operations and results have been maintained.
- Ongoing monitoring using PDCA cycle is performed to ensure sustenance of outcomes.

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