



Improving the Utilization of Self-Registration Kiosks in SGH SOC H



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Aim: To improve the utilization of self-registration kiosks in SOC H to 75% within 12 months

Introduction

Self-registration kiosks were adopted by the Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOC) in SGH as a means to streamline the registration process for patients and improve productivity of the counter staff. Generally, two kiosks equal about one registration staff full-time equivalent (FTE), releasing the staff to perform other duties.

When first introduced at Clinic H, these kiosks saw low utilization rates of below 40%. While self-help kiosks have largely invaded our personal lives (automated teller machines, self-payment kiosks, etc), it would seem that patients have not embraced the use of such technology in a hospital setting.

Methods

A root cause analysis was done in order to elucidate the main reasons for the low utilization. Through the use of a fish-bone diagram (Figure 1), it was determined that there are three main causes for the low usage, (1) patients, (2) staff and (3) location.

Under the staff and patient categories, the main reasons that were raised could be solved by ensuring proper communication with both patients and staff.

As Clinic H has a kiosk physically located within the clinic, other location-based concerns, such as having a kiosk near the entrance of the clinic, were analysed and used as learning points for the development of future clinics.



Figure 2: Communication to staff during roll call



Figure 3: Staff assumes role of a greeter to demonstrate use of kiosk to patients

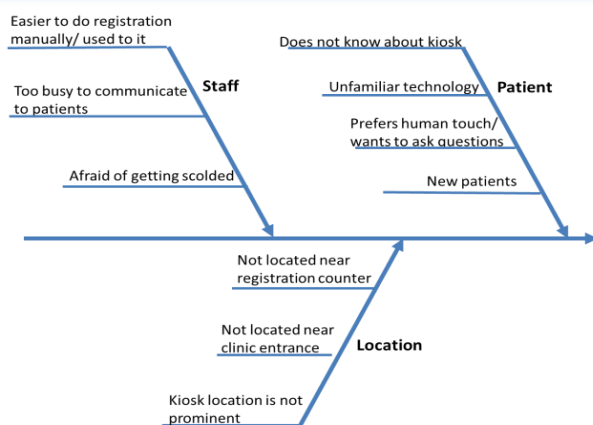


Figure 1: RCA of low utilization of self-registration kiosks

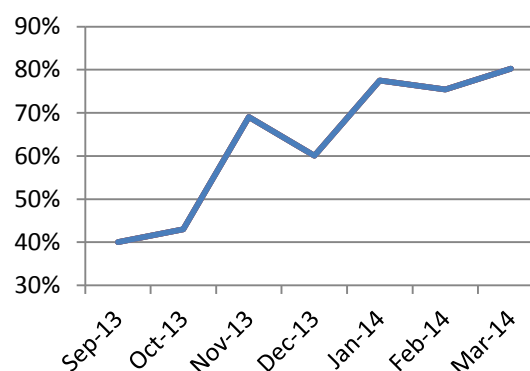


Figure 4: Self-registration kiosk utilization rates

Interventions

In order to create more awareness of the self-registration kiosks, a campaign to educate staff and patients on the kiosks was carried out.

Firstly, through the use of weekly roll calls (Figure 2) and staff interaction, the team at Clinic H were educated on the benefits of the kiosk such as improving productivity during the registration process and reduced workload.

In order to promote the kiosks to patient, the staff were encouraged to assume the role of a greeter (Figure 3) and guide patients on the use of the kiosk.

The staff were also taught how to promote the use of the kiosks to patients in the following ways:

- Sell the benefits – “If you use the kiosk, you would not need to wait to be registered”
- Highlight the presence of the kiosk – “Let me show you our new kiosk”
- Provide a fallback – “We will always be here if you need help”
- Promote other kiosks – “You can use any other kiosk in SGH for appointments at this and other clinics”

Results

After the staff and patient education campaign, the take up rates of the self-registration kiosk at SOC H saw a marked improvement, seeing an increase from 40% to 80% within 7 months (Figure 4).

A survey conducted with the staff showed an increase in job satisfaction as they were able to focus more on the registration of new patients. Patients also provided positive feedback on the service as they do not have to wait at the registration counter for their turn.

Based on the current self-registration utilization rate of 80% and a monthly attendance of around 4,300 people at Clinic H, a time savings of just 20 seconds would translate to 18 man-hours saved each month.

Conclusion

Actively promoting and educating the benefits of using the kiosk to both patients and the clinic team was the key driving force behind this initiative. In addition, providing support to patients remains key to establishing a positive relationship. For example, if patients are not comfortable with the kiosks, they can always proceed to the manned counters for assistance. In this aspect, kiosks are present as an express option for patients who are comfortable with such technologies and desire their convenience.

The use of an education campaign for both staff and patients was effective at improving utilization rates of the self-registration kiosks. This two-pronged approach was important as staff who are able to see the benefits of self-registration, are able to education patients with more enthusiasm and confidence. In order to sustain these efforts, it is important to regularly update the clinic staff on the latest utilization statistics so as to gauge progress as well as regularly reinforcing the benefits of increasing kiosk usage.

Additionally, by actively promoting and reinforcing the idea of self-registration, patients who visit other clinics will be conditioned to using the kiosks at other clinics. Hence, the overall utilization rates of the kiosks would increase at SOC. This approach would additionally form a stepping stone which exposes patients to self-help technologies in the healthcare setting, paving the way for the implementation of self-payment kiosks in the near future.