

# Fast Tracking of Instrument Re-processing

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## Aim

Total asepsis is of absolute priority during surgery. It is a challenge for operating room nurses to ensure reprocessing of contaminated instruments in a period of time that is as short as possible without compromising on the sterility of the instrument yet causing no delay in the smooth running of the operation list.

The aim of this project is to establish a fast, effective and efficient workflow in order to improve the turnover time in urgent reprocessing of contaminated instruments.

## Methodology

A team was formed with stakeholders from departments involved in the process including Major Operating Theatre, Day Surgery and most importantly Central Sterile Supply Unit (CSSU).

Selection of members were based on the experience. Below is the Fishbone Diagram (Fig 1), to illustrate causes of delay in urgent instrument reprocessing. Fig 2 lists the solutions suggested by the team.

Fig 1

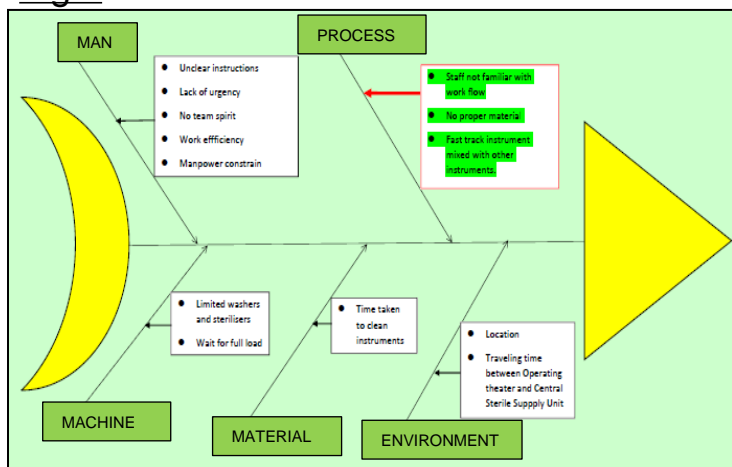


Fig 2

CAUSES	SOLUTIONS	LIMITATIONS	APPLICABILITY
<b>MAN</b> Gaps in communication.	Educate staff the importance of urgent reprocessing of instruments.	Different education level of staff.	Poor
<b>PROCESS</b> Instruments for urgent reprocessing are mixed among other instruments on the trolley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design a brightly coloured and eye catching instrument tag.</li> <li>Easy to do tag that cost very little.</li> <li>Staff could understand instrument with the "FAST TRACK" tag = urgent reprocessing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tag has to be made available to all user.</li> <li>Staff has to look out for this tag.</li> </ul>	Good
<b>MACHINE</b> Limited washers and sterilisers.	Place instruments needed for urgent reprocessing on next available washer and steriliser load.	Number of washers and sterilisers are fixed and cannot be increased.	Poor
<b>MATERIALS</b> Instruments not rinsed after use, resulting in heavy bioburden stuck on instruments.	Scrub nurse to rinse instruments thoroughly.	Takes longer time to send instruments to Central Sterile Supply Unit (CSSU) for urgent reprocessing.	Poor
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Location: Time taken to transport instruments between Operating Theatre (OT) and CSSU.	Send soiled instruments to CSSU for urgent reprocessing as soon as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long distance between OT and CSSU</li> <li>Extra time taken for lift to travel from OT at level 2 to CSSU at basement 1.</li> </ul>	Poor

## Solution

Final root cause analysis was conducted and solution proposed through brainstorming was to utilise an eye catching tag "FAST TRACK" to tag onto the instrument for urgent reprocessing.

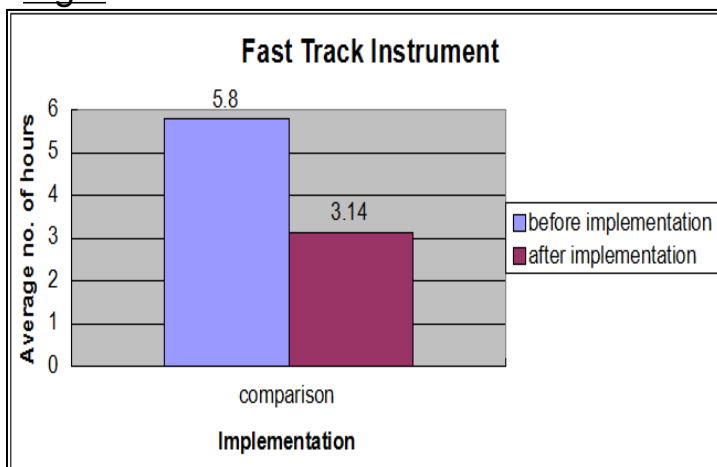
The process of fast tracking was disseminated and reinforced to all staff. Workflow was made into a simplified guide and placed in all utility rooms of the OT.



## RESULT

**Time Saved by 45.8%**

Fig 3



## Result

There was a significant improvement in time taken for urgent instrument reprocessing and returning to the operating theatre with the implementation of the enhanced workflow and red tag as shown in Fig 3.



## Conclusion

With the success of the workflow and tag implementation, a durable steel red tag will be made available for use to replace plastic tags. The process for enhanced fast tracking of instruments was also rolled out in Day Surgery.