



# Improving patients' waiting time and experience at payment counters in CDLD.

Singapore Healthcare Management 2018

Razia Begum, Singapore General Hospital  
 Nor Aishah, Singapore General Hospital  
 Yang Hui, Singapore General Hospital  
 Shawn Ho, Singapore General Hospital

## Background

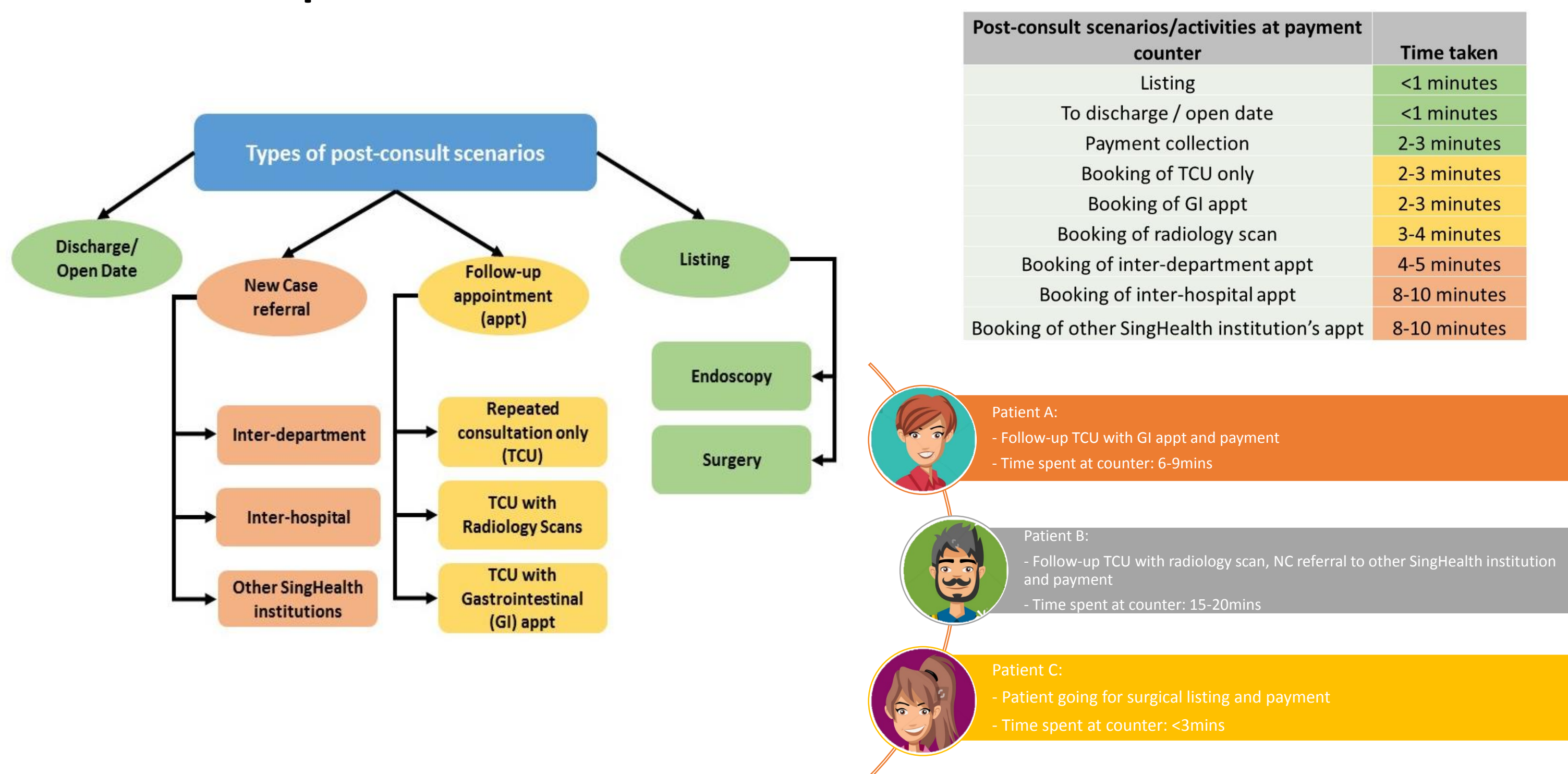
Centre for Digestive and Liver Diseases (CDLD) was formed through the merger of three separate clinics to provide a one-stop service centre dedicated to patients with complex Digestive and Liver disorders. Being one of the biggest clinics in the outpatient service, it expects an average attendance of up to 600-700 patients a day with six counters attending to patients' payment and re-appointment needs after consultation. Due to the high workload, the clinic often receives patient complaints associated to long waiting time at payment counters. The frequent need to perform service recovery and disturbance from patients often translate to lower work productivity and high stress level among staff. In response to these challenges, there is an urgent need to tackle the issue of long waiting time at the payment counters.

## Aims

1. To remodel payment counter work processes by identifying a feasible group of patients to channel away from the cashier waiting area.
2. To reduce the stress amongst the staff
3. Improve their work productivity and quality.
4. To enhance patients' experience by improving waiting time for the identified group of people.

## Methodology

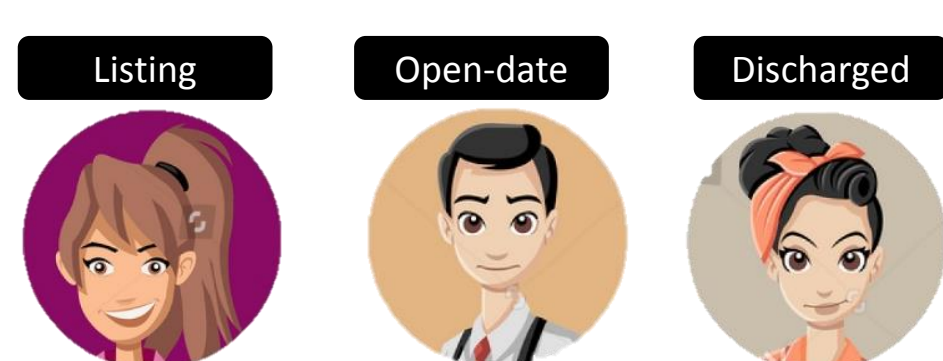
### 1 Analysis of the different post-consult scenarios which payment counters have to attend to and the time taken needed to complete them.



### 2 Identifying the suitable group of patients and dedicating a counter to address their needs

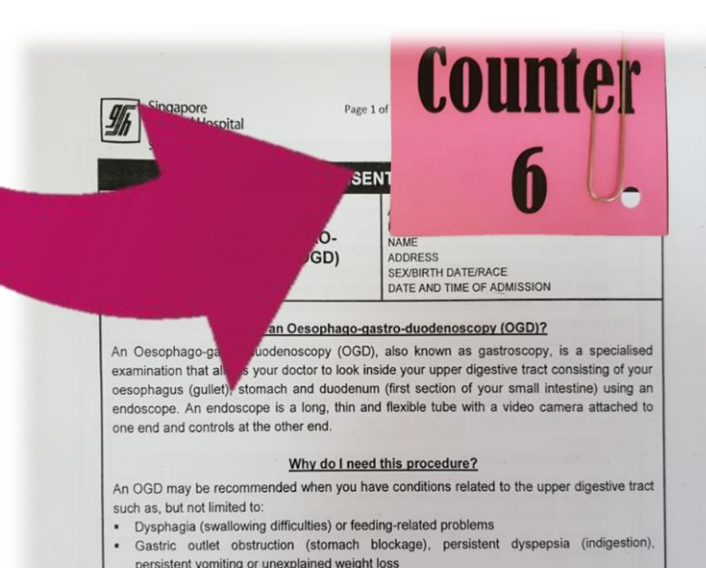
- The analysis suggested that the need to make various appointments for patients during payment is one of the main causes for long waiting time.
- Patients who are i) making payments prior to procedural listings, ii) given open date appointments or iii) discharged generally require short processing time. Our analysis showed that they represent a significant group of patients handled by the clinic.
- Counter 6 was then designated to serve this group of patients with high turnover rate which will in turn helped to channel them away from the waiting area.

Identified group of patients to be attended by a dedicated counter



### 3 Giving out of visual cues by room assistance to ensure the identified patients are directed to the correct counter.

### 4 Post intervention survey was administered to collect data on the waiting time and experience for this group of patients.



## Results

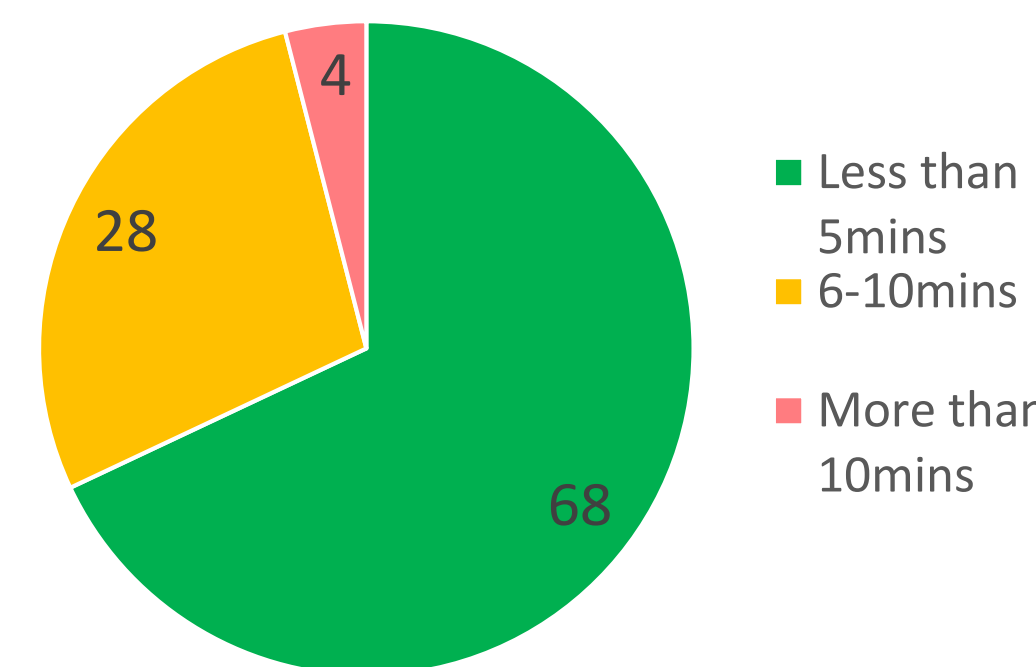


Fig 1. Feedback on the duration spent waiting for payment (N=100). 96% of the patients waited less than 10 min for payment, with 68% waiting less than 5 min.

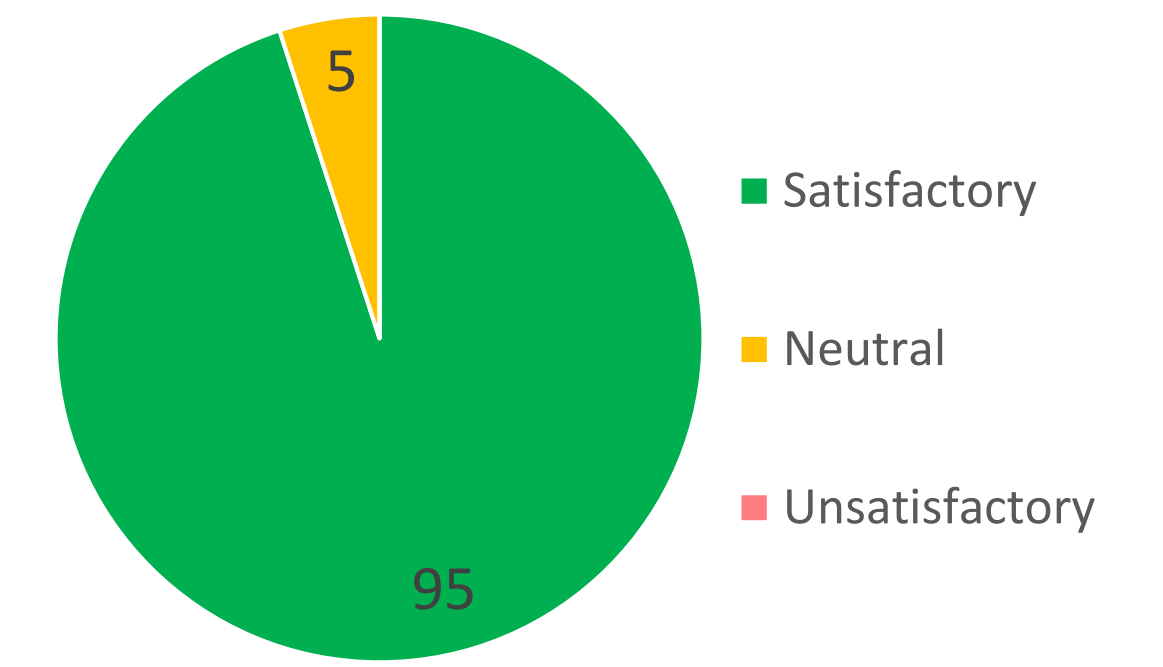


Fig 2. Patient satisfaction towards the dedicated counter created (N=100). 95% of the patients rated "satisfactory" for the service catered and none rated "unsatisfactory".

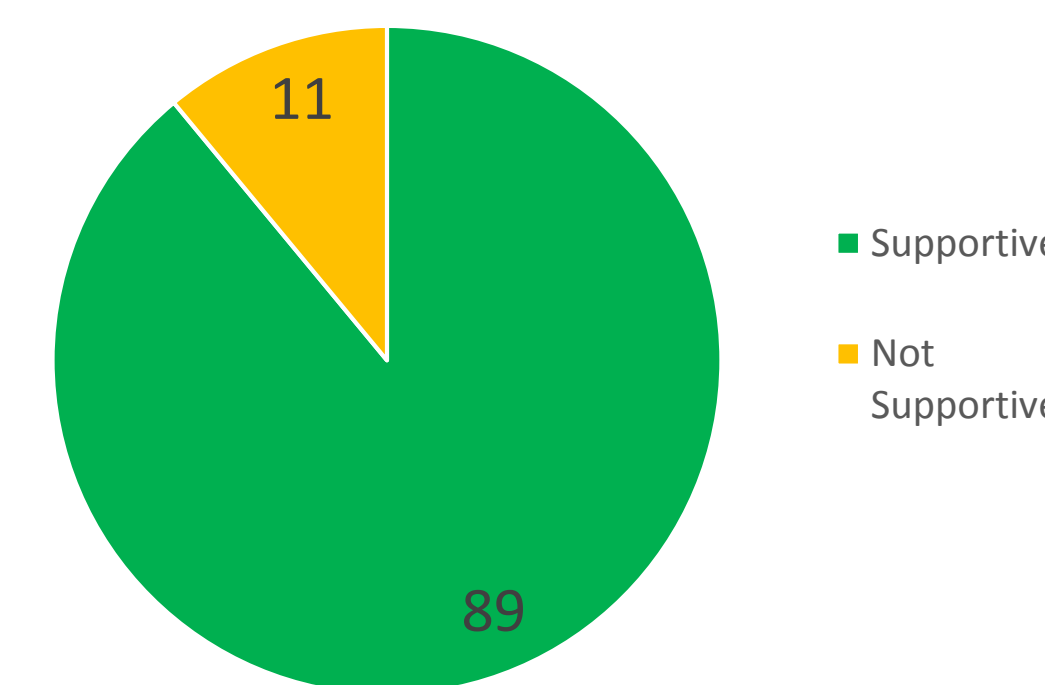


Fig 3. Patient's support on having a dedicated counter for non-appointment billing cases. 89% were supportive and felt that this initiative should continue

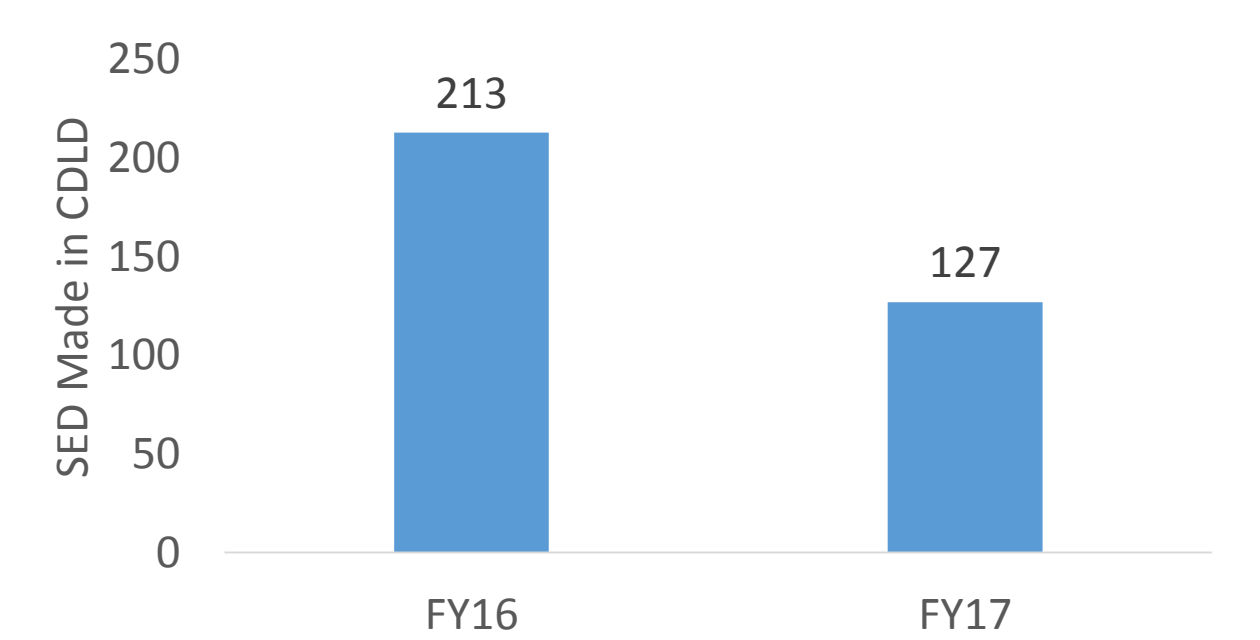


Fig 4. Number of collection error incurred in CDLD. There was a 40.4% decrease (from 213 to 127) in total Shortage Excess Declaration (SED) between FY2016 and FY2017 after the implementation in May 2017. This reduction in error indicates a decrease in stress experienced by cashiers.

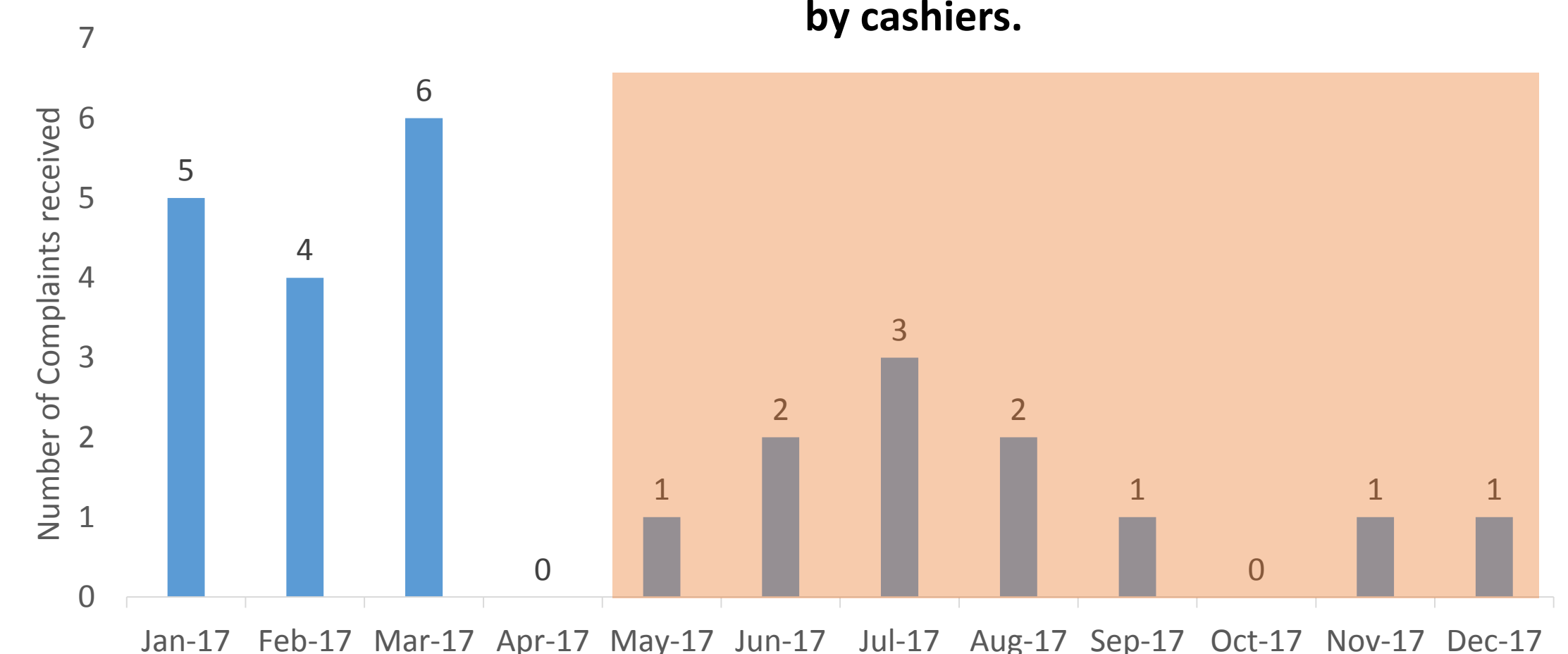


Fig 5. Number of complaints related to payment waiting time made to Service Quality. The number complaints received dropped significantly since the start of the project (May'17 onwards).

## Conclusion

There is an improvement in patients' experience in this identified group of patients due to a reduction in waiting time to payment. With lesser patients cluttering at the waiting area, the stress faced by staff at the cashier counters has also shown improvement. This has eventually helped to improve work productivity and quality. The team aims to continue to review patient and staff feedbacks to make CDLD a pleasant environment for both patients and staff.