Smart Appointments
Hassle Free Experience

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BACKGROUND

In line with efforts to enable patients to perform self-service functions in the polyclinic, SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) introduced a Smart Appointment Booking System for patients to manage their own appointments in SHP.

The enhancements allow patients to perform self-service appointment booking, changing and cancelling of appointments at our Service Selection Kiosks and Electronic & Mobile Platform. This reduces the need to go the appointment counters in the clinic.

AIM

The existing IT application (OAS) to manage appointments was enhanced to provide:
- Functionality for patients to make appointments via mobile applications, website and Service Selection Kiosks in the clinic.
- Ability to link-appointment types and propose optimized appointment timings based on patients' planned care needs.

This reduces the need for patients to at the appointment counters for most appointment bookings.

METHODOLOGY

A project workgroup was formed to drive this project with various IT personnel: NCS OAS Program development team and SCM development team. The existing patient flow was analysed and the workgroup drafted a flow chart for Smart Appointment based on (1) which care team the patients are enrolled to and (2) different types and combinations of patient care needs which require next appointment booking and linkage of appointments.


Use Case diagram for integrated care team and planned care needs
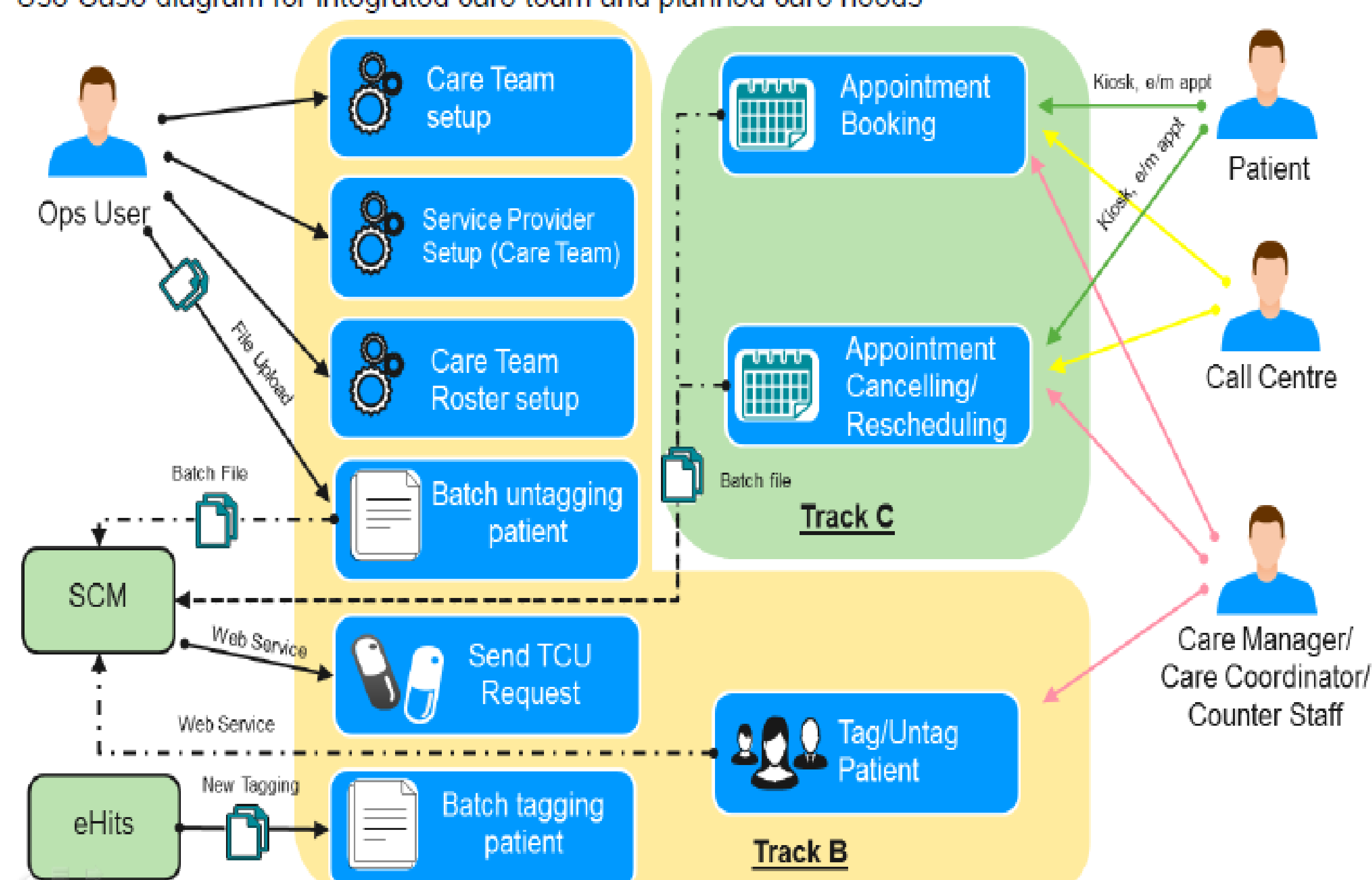
INTERVENTIONS

The project was piloted at Punggol Polyclinic during the new clinic opening. System logic was tested and tweaks to system setups were implemented to enable successful booking of appointments by patients.

The patients were actively directed to the service kiosks to book combinations of linked-appointment. As the system will link the appointments and propose optimal appointment timings, the patients do not have to remember which sequence of appointment booking. For example the patient does not have to remember to book a laboratory appointment on the same day before booking the appointment to see a doctor.
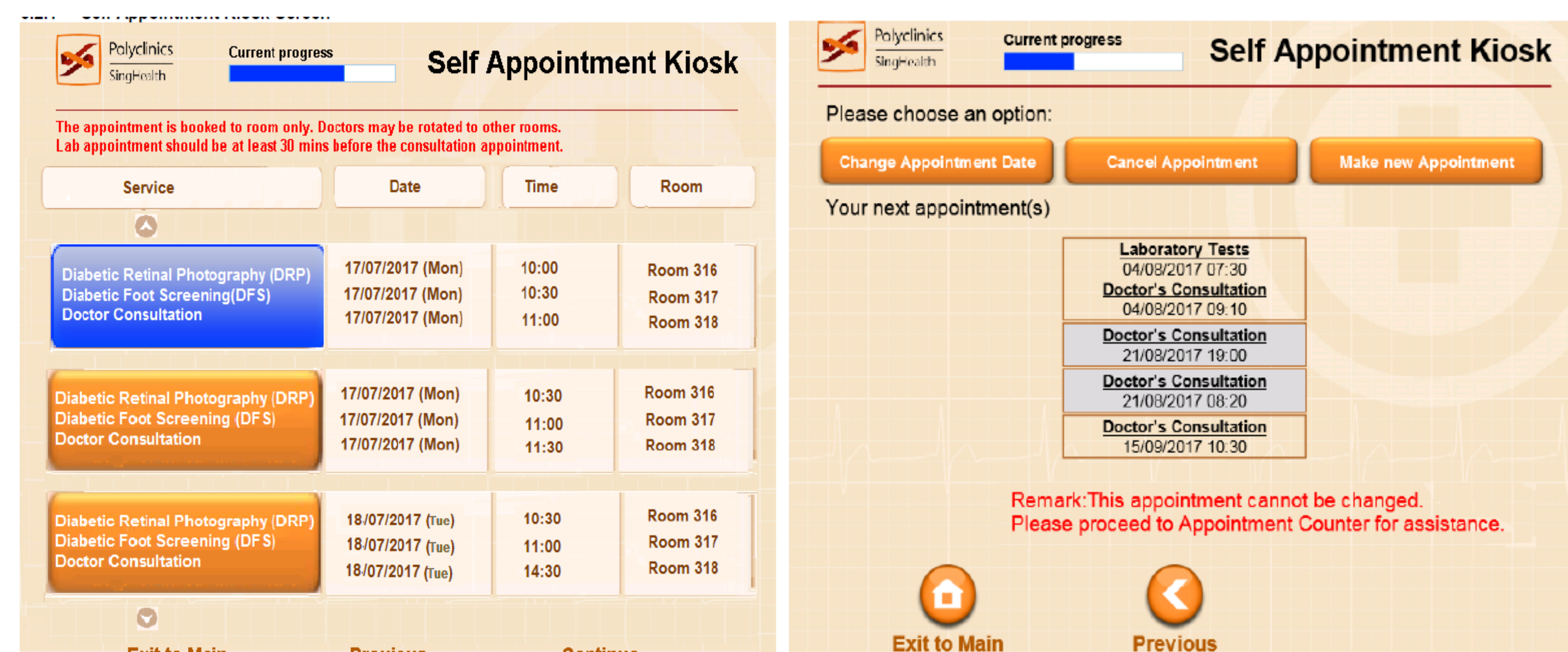

RESULTS

The Smart Appointment Booking System creates convenience for the patients as they can easily book their follow-up appointments via the self-service kiosks and electronic platforms. Patients no longer need to queue at the counter for appointment making.

SHP achieved:
1. Increase capacity to deploy staff to perform other value added roles while reducing the need to man physical appointment counters.
2. 8 FTEs re-deployed to support care co-ordination works
3. An average of 46.66% Self appointment usage (exceeding an initial target of 30% Self appointment making target rate).
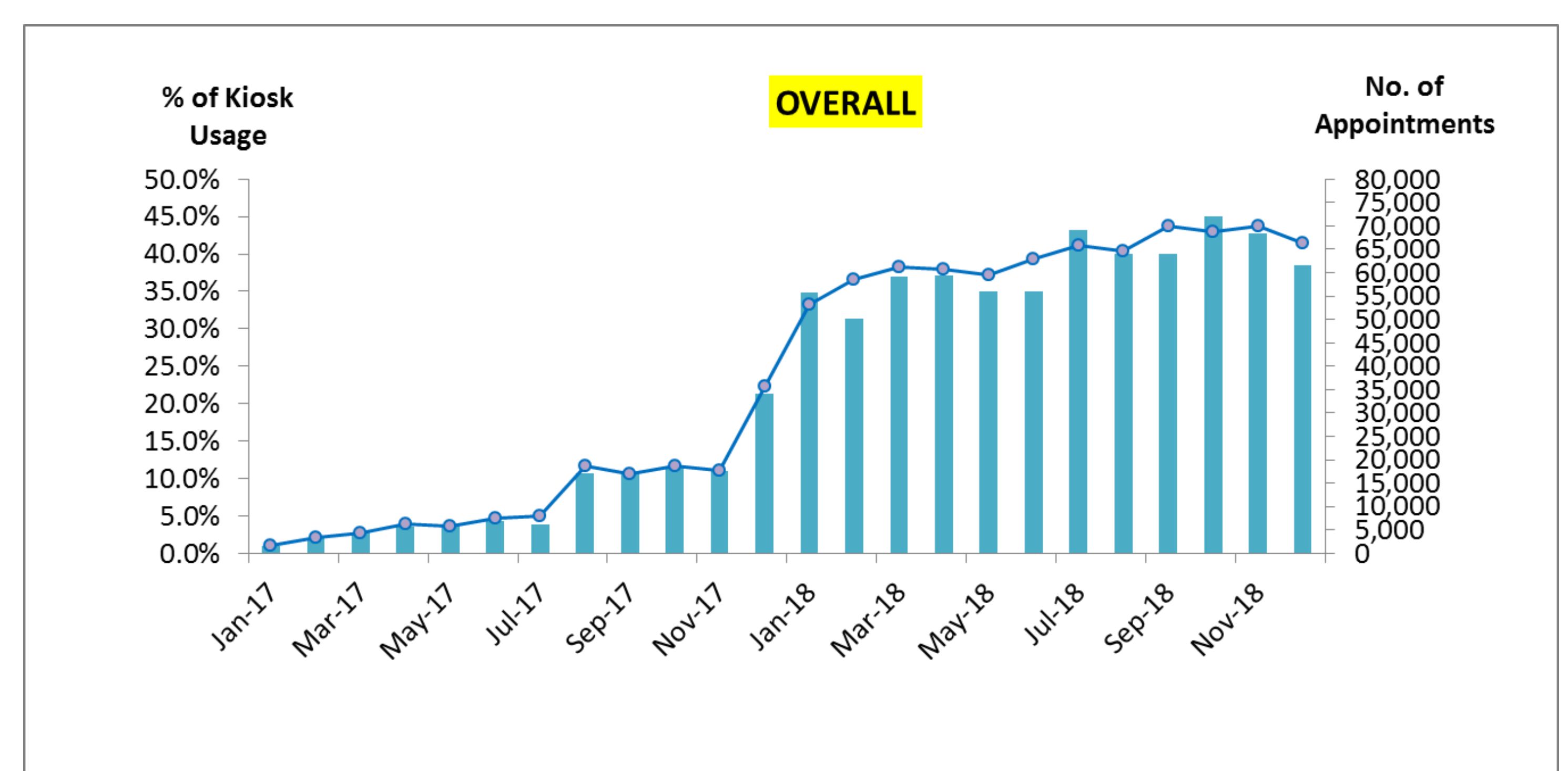
CONCLUSIONS

Smart Appointment improves patient experience and generates cost savings to SHP. This project has been successfully implemented at all SingHealth Polyclinic in by the second half of 2018