Improving patient's experience for Medisave bill payments at Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOC)

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Background

Medisave is a national medical savings scheme in Singapore. To make healthcare more accessible and affordable, the Ministry of Health introduced the Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) and Flexi-Medisave (FM) intended for outpatient use.

Patient journey in the outpatient setting at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) often involve multiple touchpoints. Those making payment by CDMP and FM is further complicated by an extra stop as they will be sent to specialized Outpatient Medisave Service (OMS) counters. This leads to excessive patient movement and additional waiting time created for a patient population that is increasingly made up of people in the silver generation.

Consequently, the CDMP/FM billing process was reviewed with the aim to enhance patient's experience.

Methodology

Reviewing current challenges

NO medication to collect

SOC consultation → OMS counter → Pharmacy → OMS counter → Home
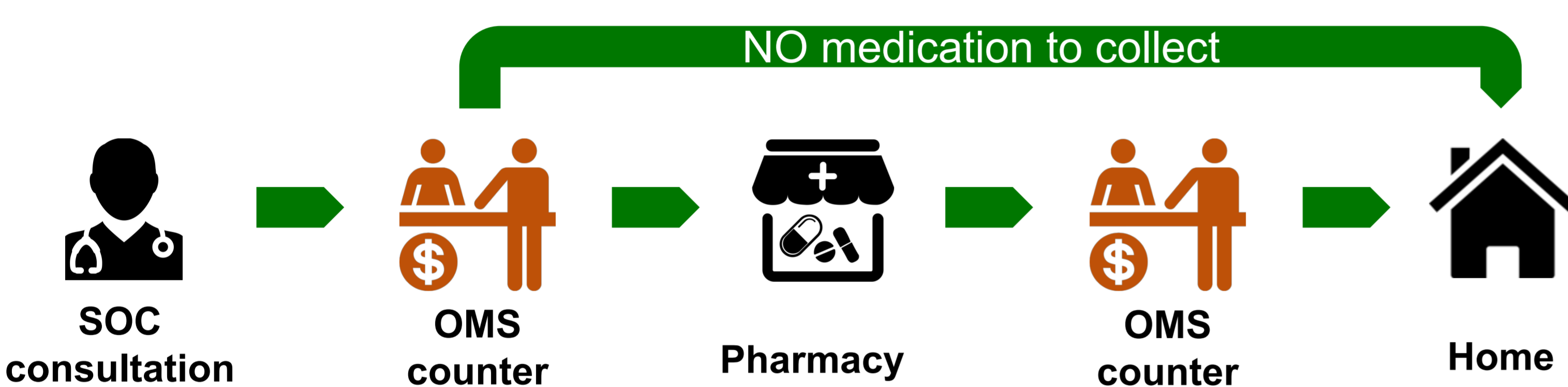
Fig 1: Current patient journey at SOCs

Patients with medications utilizing Medisave walk to OMS counters twice:
- To verify and input 3rd Party Payer code and diagnosis after consultation
- For processing bills after consult or collecting medication from pharmacy

Issues arising from current patient journey:
- Congestion at OMS counters and pharmacy

OMS at Blk 3   Blk 3 Pharmacy   Blk 4 Pharmacy
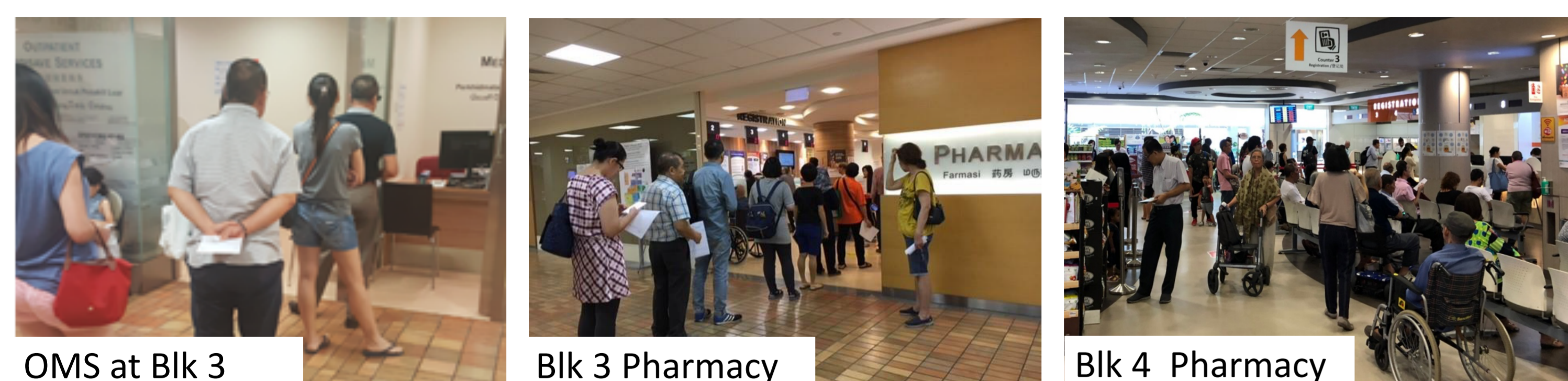
- Excessive patient movement of ~280 steps

~280 STEPS 5 mins

Designing strategy for improvement

To help patients **REST**
(**R**educe **E**xcessive movement, **S**horten waiting **T**ime)

1. Collaborate and engage with stakeholders to formulate solution
- Brainstorming sessions reaching decision to apply Drop & Go methodology – aligning with the cashless, smart-nation initiative
2. Seek buy-in from clinic staff, pharmacy and business office for roll out
3. Seek management advice and approval for implementation
4. Mass communication to various stakeholders by:
- Sharing at clinic roll calls & department meeting
- Email notifications
- Preparing notice and flyers for patients and staff
- Preparing FAQs for stakeholders

Methodology

Picture 1: Communicating new workflow by roll-calls and department meetings

No medication to collect

Drop & Go

SOC consultation → Pharmacy → Drop & Go → Home

Fig 2: New patient journey at SOCs

To streamline patient journey, the need for presenting to OMS counter is removed. Patients utilizing Medisave will have their bill processed backend via Drop & Go.

Results

Since implementation of Drop & Go for Medisave billing in August 2018, average daily number of Medisave transactions increased from 108 to 180 per day (~66.7% increase in Medisave utilization).

Drop & Go take-up rate	Aug – Dec 2018	Jan – May 2019
Average number of Medisave cases/day	108	180
Average number of Drop & Go cases/day	76	155

% take-up rate Aug – Dec 2018
30%
70%

% take-up rate Jan – May 2019
14%
86%

Decline Drop & Go   Drop & Go
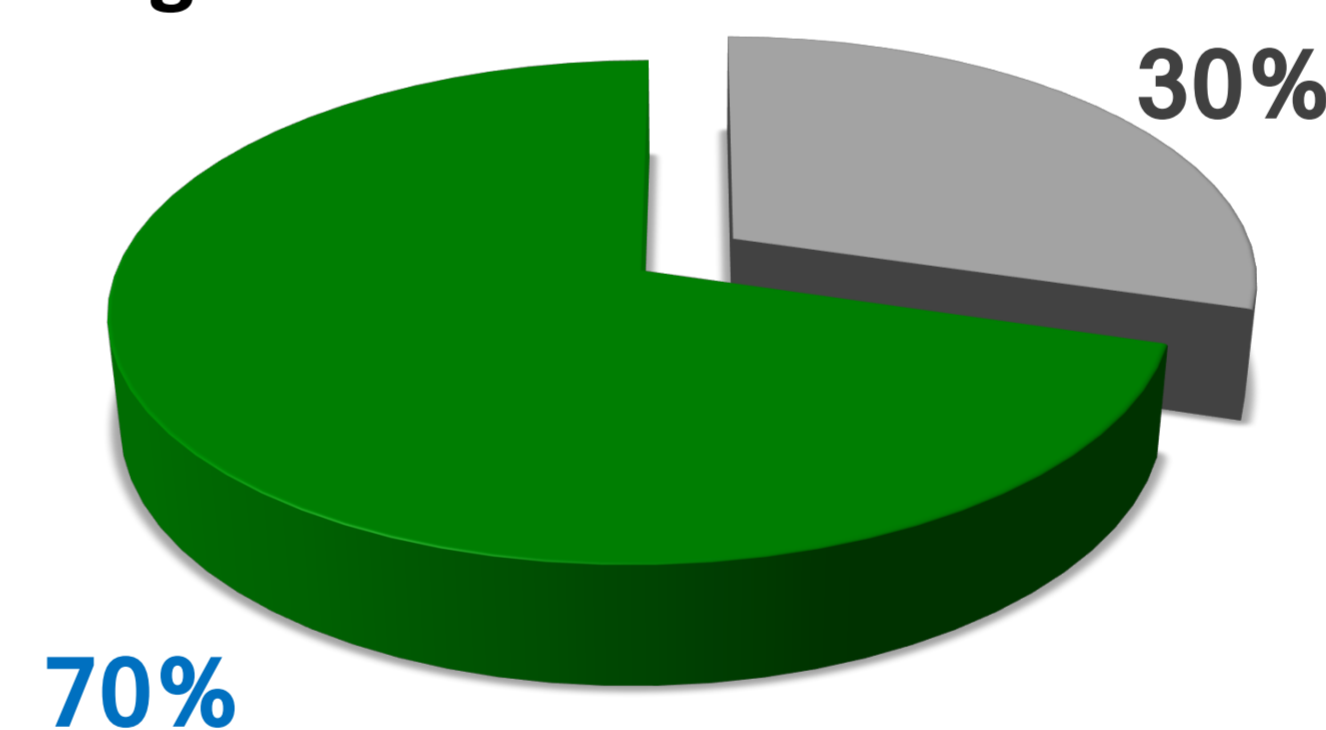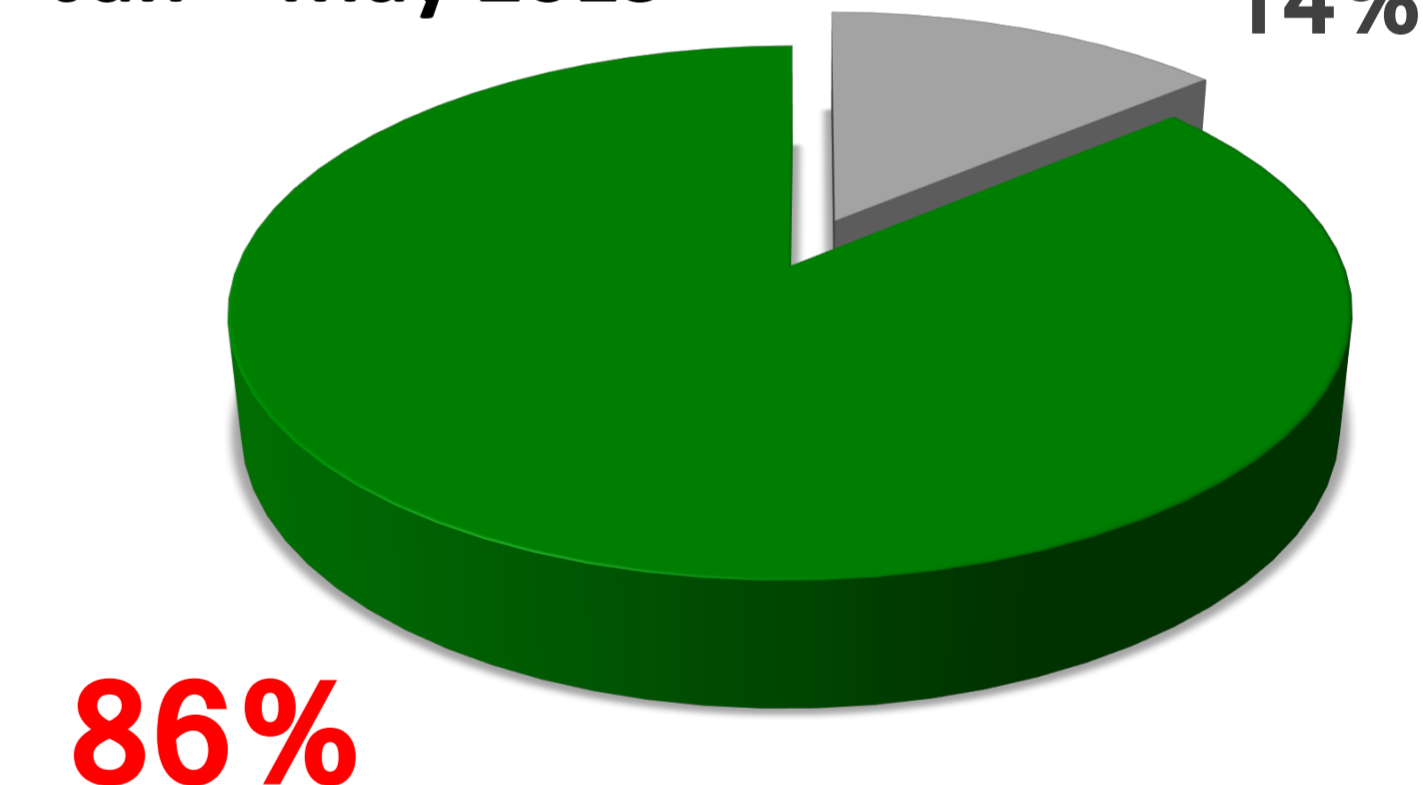
Majority of patients are receptive to utilizing Drop & Go for Medisave payments.

Benefits of streamlined patient journey:
- 50% reduction of patient touchpoints achieved
- Time saving ~30minutes → due to elimination of need to queue at OMS and waiting for bills to be processed
- Eliminated excessive and unnecessary patient movement
- Up to 5 counter space may be freed up for other relevant functions

Conclusion

This project created a more pleasant and seamless patient experience by reducing excessive movement and waiting time. The new process helps shorten the turn-around time for processing Medisave bills, allowing manpower to be more efficiently diverted to other initiatives benefiting those who require more immediate attention. The project is also a step towards the direction the national objective of going cashless and providing additional payment options for patients and SGH's objective of going counter-less in future clinic models.

In the future, this project may be expanded further to tap on the clinical expertise of pharmacists doing post-consult reviews and medication delivery service to further streamline and simplify patients' healthcare journey.