



Enhanced Communication on Collection of Prescriptions and Referrals at Urgent O&G Centre (UOGC), KK Women's and Children's Hospital

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Background

Nurses in Urgent O&G Centre (UOGC) have to contact patient to return to UOGC to collect prescription or memorandum for follow-up treatment as investigation results such as blood test or swab culture takes 2-3 processing days. Figure 1 illustrates a typical patient's journey from day 0 of consultation to day 9 when patient returns to collect prescription or referral. Very often, calls to contact patients were unsuccessful. Besides spending an average of 45 minutes daily to contact patients, the long turnaround time for patients to receive results also delays treatment.

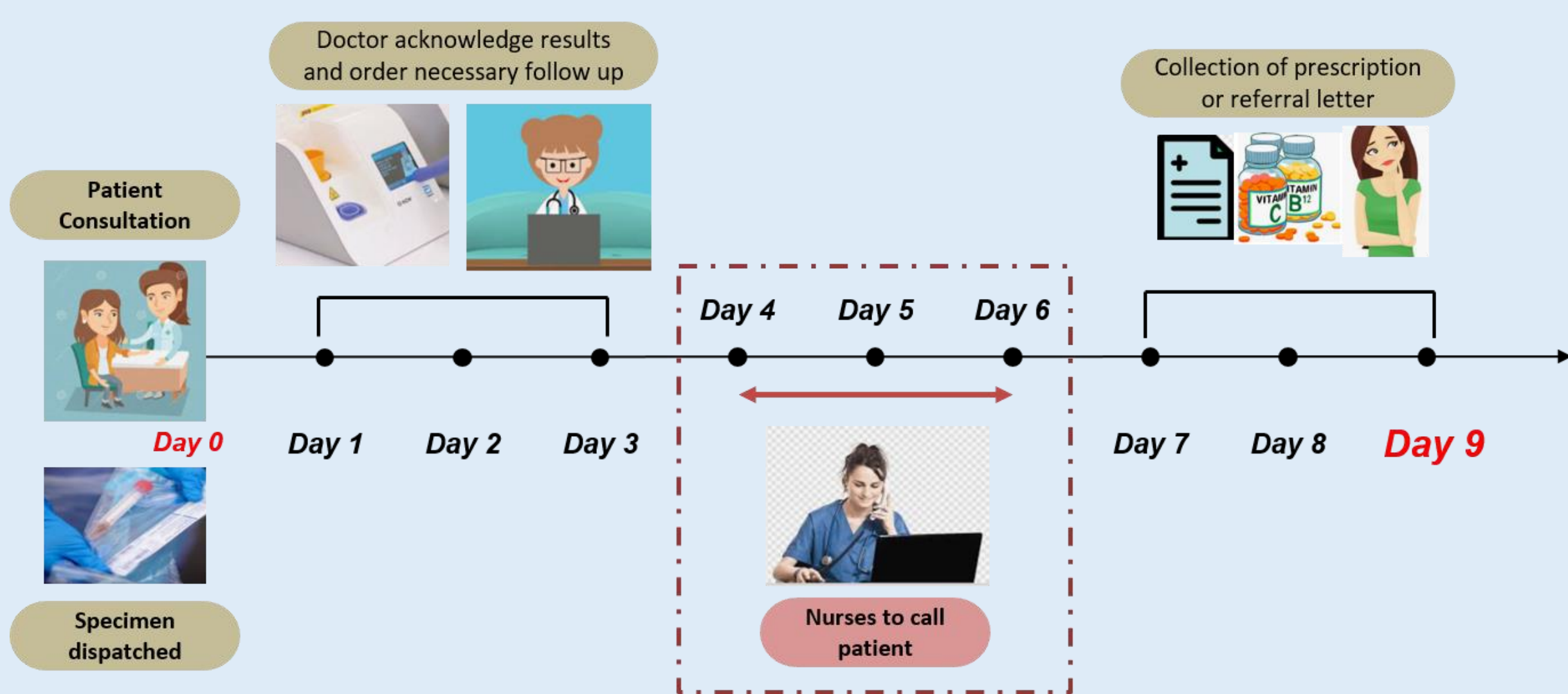


Figure 1 Patient's journey at UOGC from consultation to the collection of prescription or referral

Aims

- 1) To timely inform patient to collect prescription or referral on the day of order
- 2) To reduce time spent on contacting patients for prescription or referral collection by 50% in two months

Root Cause Analysis and Proposed Solutions

The team discussed the current system and identified the major contributing factors as shown in Figure 2.

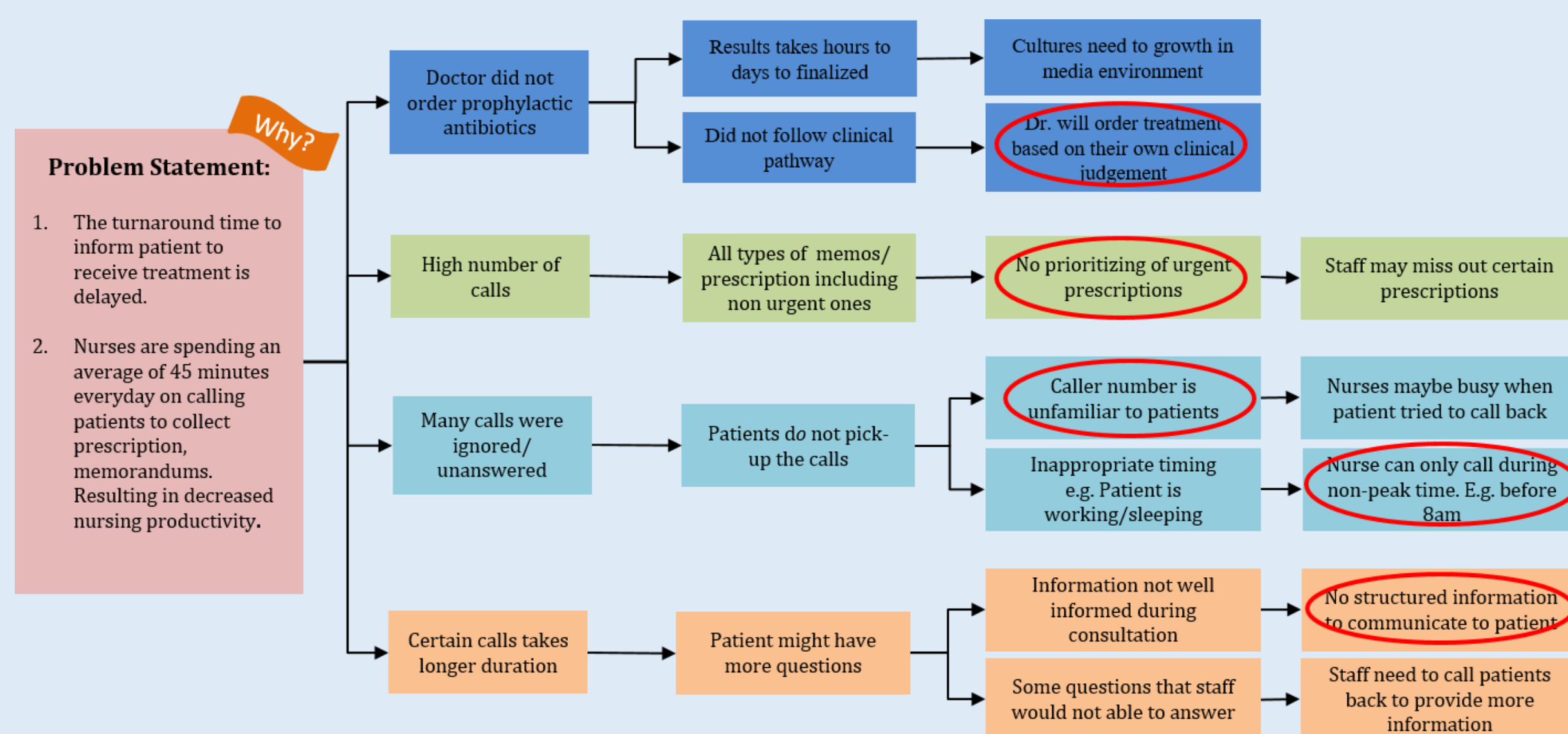


Figure 2 Tree Diagram for Root Cause Analysis

Based on the identified root causes, possible solutions targeting these factors were brainstormed as shown in Figure 3.

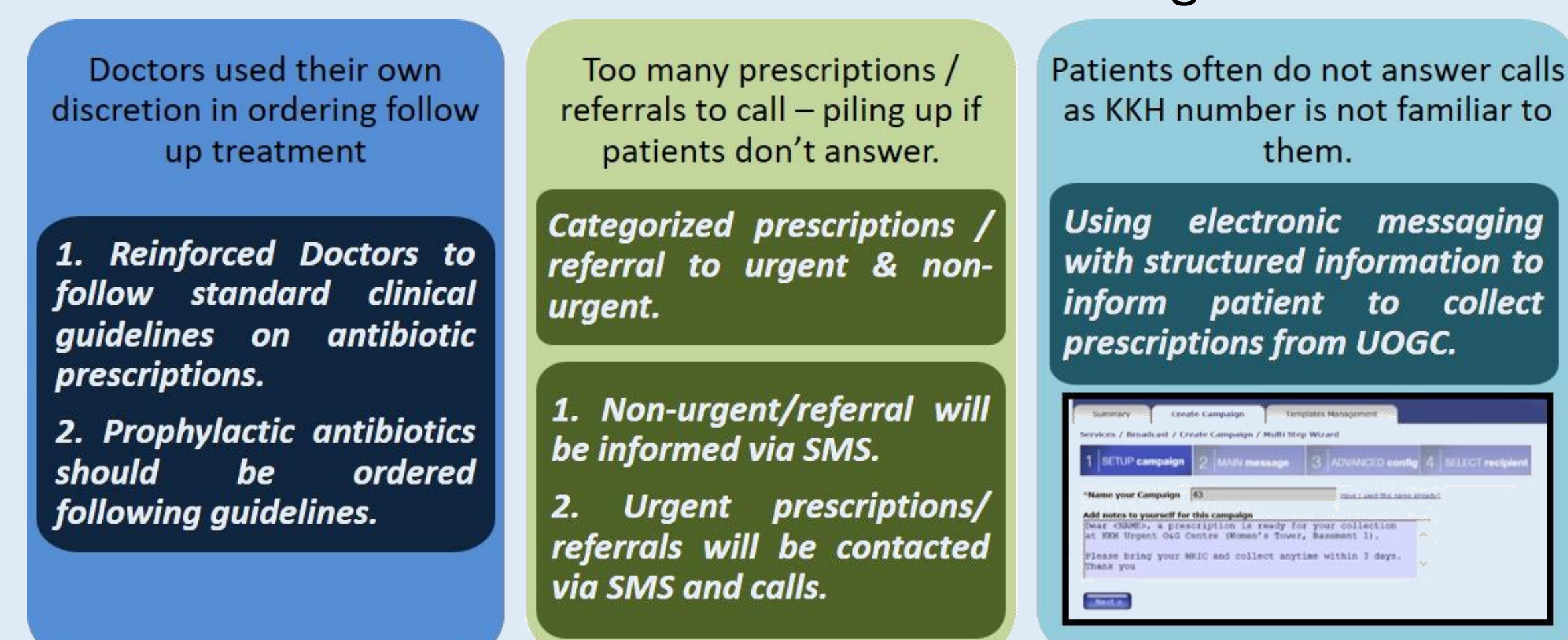


Figure 3 Proposed Solutions

Intervention

Electronic messaging system was selected as the solution to implement. SMS can be done during overlapping time where there is enough manpower in UOGC. Prescriptions have been categorized to urgent and non-urgent. Patients that require urgent prescriptions were both called and electronic message sent on the day that investigation result is acknowledged to inform on prescription collection as soon as possible or within three days. Further, the system enables SMS templates to be pre-set within the system for standardization as well as convenience (Figure 4). With easy use, this task can also be carried out by a non-medical personnel such as the Patient Service Assistant (PSA). In this way, nurses' time saved can be productively used to do other clinical work.

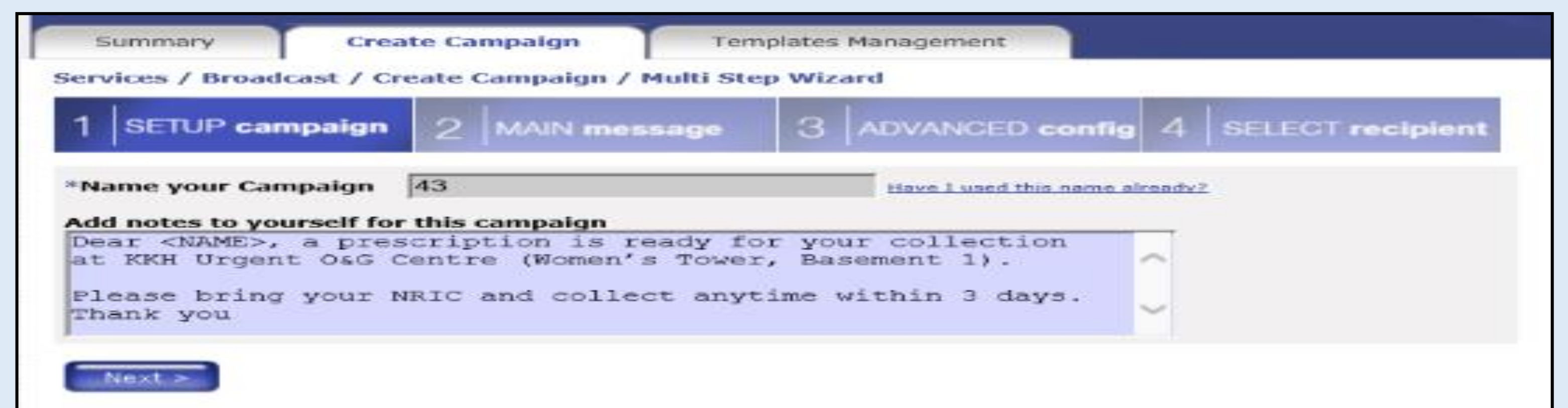


Figure 4 Electronic Messaging System Pre-set Template

Results

Implementation of Bizlive electronic messaging system was piloted from Jan to Aug 2019 in UOGC for all prescription or referral collection.

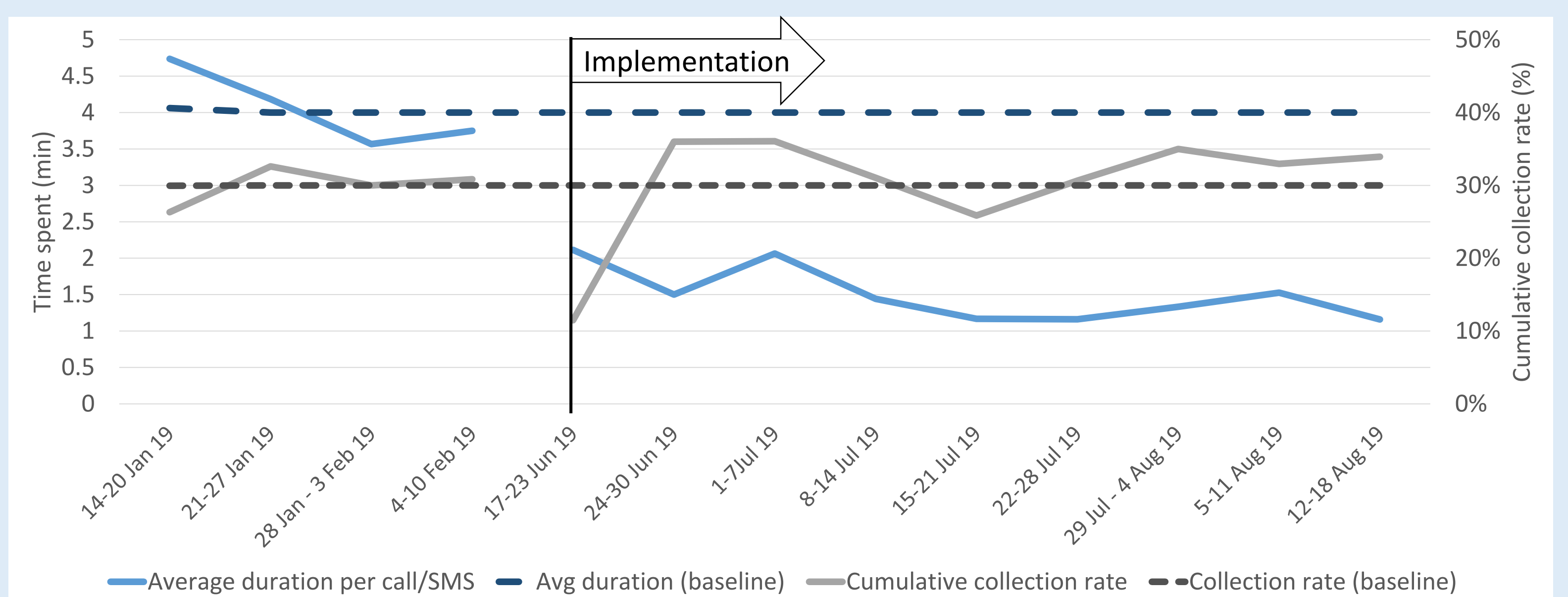


Figure 5 Time spent calling patient and Cumulative collection rate

Although cumulative collection rate maintained around 30%, time spent calling patients by the nurses has significantly decreased by 63% from baseline of 4.0min to 1.5min (Figure 5). Through the electronic messaging system, not only were 100% patients contacted (as recorded by the Bizlive sent report) but also more timely informed of their investigation results within same day of order. It has effectively enhanced the communication stage where time spent calling patients can be reduced from 3 days to 1 day and shorten patient's journey to collect prescription or referral by day 7 instead of day 9 as in Figure 1. In addition, a post-implementation survey by nurses showed positive feedback about electronic messaging systems being an effective way of reaching out to patients. Time spent on calling can be saved and more meaningfully used for nurses to focus on other clinical duties.

Conclusion

With the implementation of electronic messaging to contact and inform patients:

- ✓ Amount of time spent **reduced by 64%** from 4.0min to 1.5min
- ✓ **Optimized manpower resources** (other medical personnel can be engaged to assist in sending of electronic message while, nurses time can be more meaningfully used in clinical duties)
- ✓ Convenience and **better experience for patients**
- ✓ **Effective communication channel** was also adopted by KKH Delivery Suite