



SAY NO TO TEARS...YES TO CARE

Singapore Healthcare Management 2023

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Background

In Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC) Operating Theatre (OT), majority of the ophthalmic surgical list has high turnovers, this can cause healthcare staff to rush when performing patient care. As majority of the patients belong to the elderly population who has poorer skin integrity, the chances of sustaining skin tear is significant. This act of rushing can further increase the risk of skin tears in these patients. Examples of the patient care include removal of rubber tourniquet that can cause shearing of the skin after cannulation, and removal of sticky medical consumables, such as electrocardiogram (ECG) leads and Trident (used to administer oxygen therapy during the surgery). **In 2022, the number of broken skins had a sudden increased/ spike from 0 to 5 in a span of 4 months.** Hence the team decided to embark on this project, aimed to prevent unintended skin tears in high-risk patients by implementing a workflow and creating visual cues on identification and preventive actions for patients undergoing ophthalmic surgery in SNEC.

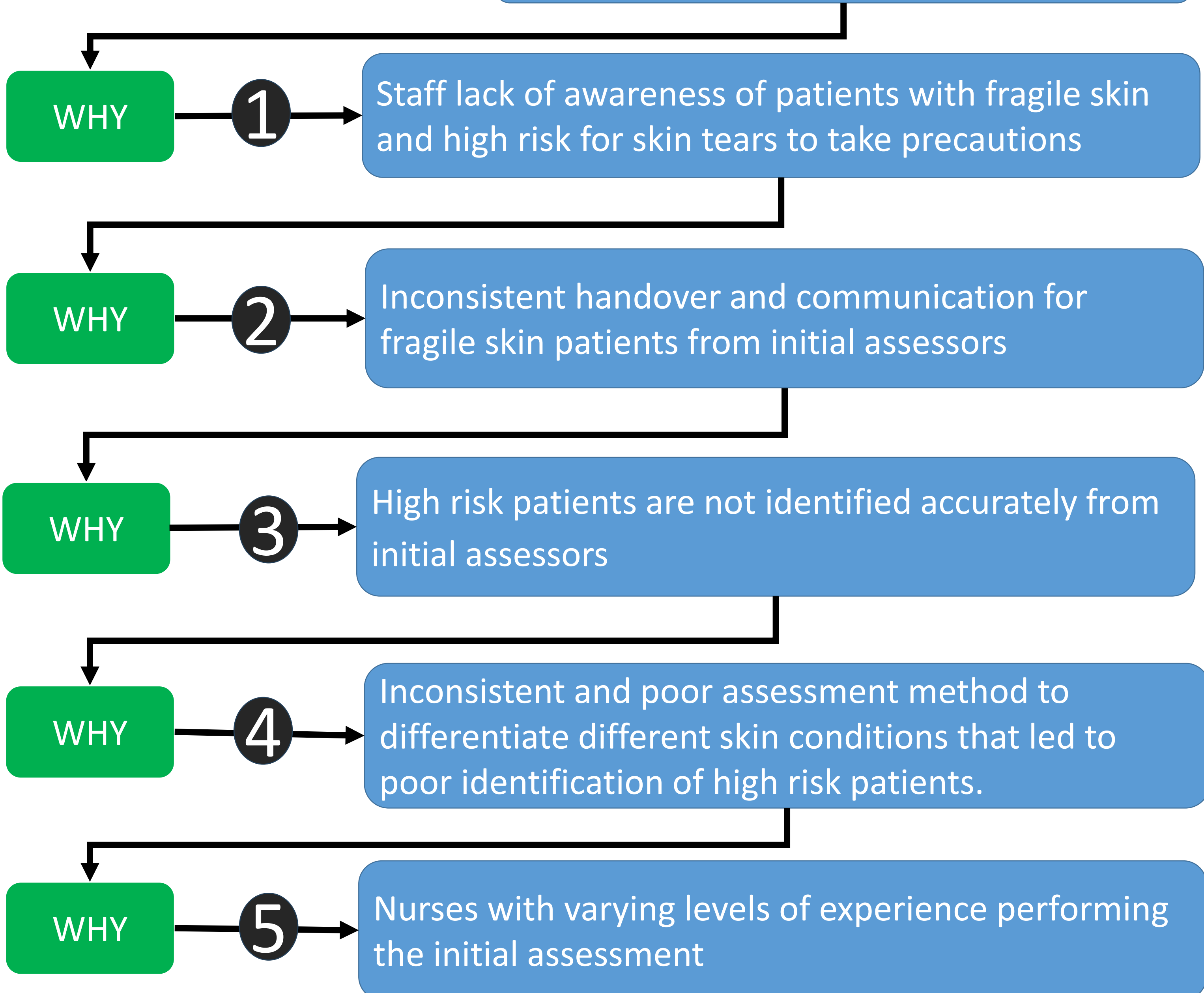
Aim

To prevent and reduce all un-intended skin tears incidences amongst risk prone patients undergoing ophthalmic surgery in SNEC.

Methodology

Root Cause (5 Why)

Increase in broken skin incidences



Countermeasures developed based on every "why"

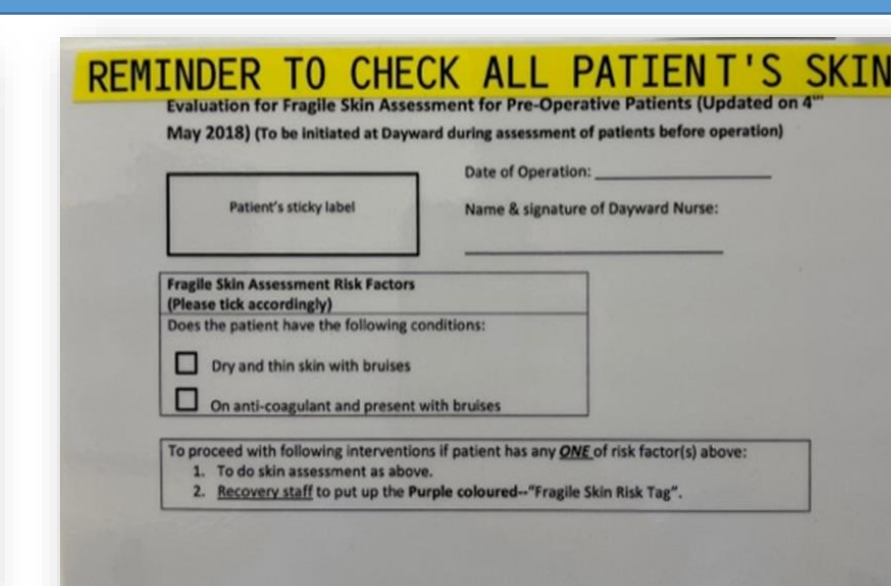
- 1 Staff Unaware of high risk fragile skin patients
- 2 Handover and communication issues from initial assessors



Purple tag:

- **Non-verbal communication tool** clipped-on to alert staff at all contact points of high risk patients.
- **Includes recommended precautionary actions** to take when performing high risk actions.

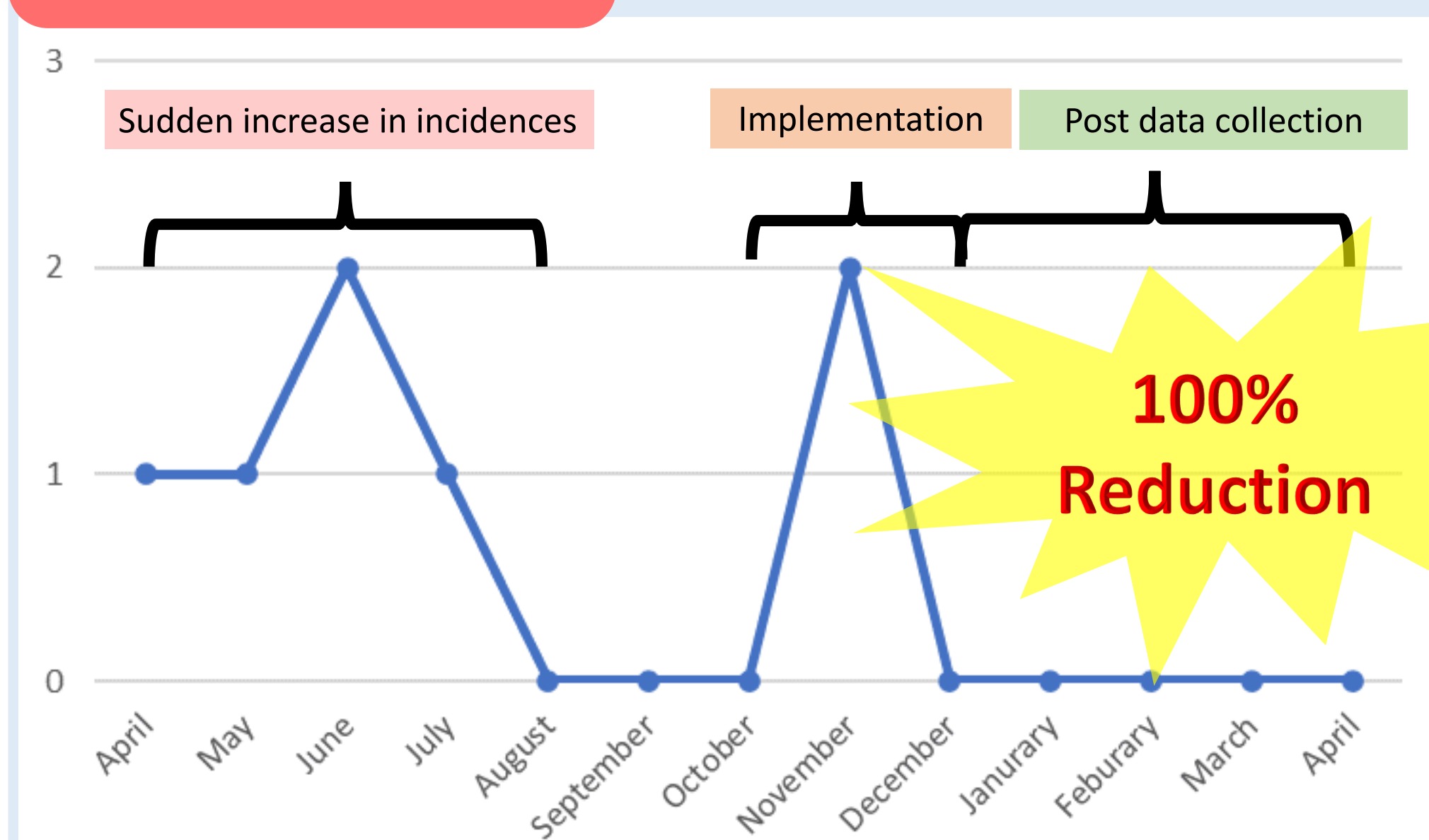
- 3 High risk patients are not identified accurately
- 4 Inconsistent and poor assessment method to differentiate high risk skin conditions
- 5 Nurses with varying levels of experience performing assessment



- **Standardised assessment questions and pictorial guide** of fragile skins to bridge the varying levels of experience to properly identify high risk patients.

Results

Whole project



- After implementing for 8 weeks, all fragile prone data were tracked and recorded from December 2022 to April 2023.
- Incidences of broken skin were **reduced from 5 to 0** from December 2022 to current April 2023 after implementation

Staff Feedback

96% Feels that purple tag helps in identifying high risk patients

98% Feels that information is easily understandable

88% Feels that information on purple tag prompts preventive actions

Conclusion

- This project has proven that the pictorial guide along with the purple tag is able to consistently identify and prevent high risk patients from sustaining un-intended broken skin throughout their ophthalmic surgical journey.

Future works

- This project can possibly be translated to other forms of assessment for initiation and prompting of prevention actions to be taken such as fall precaution.
- Using a standardised assessment tool with a pictorial guide can enhance the current tool with the addition of high alert tag to be placed on the patients themselves to prompt prevention actions.