



Improving the process of instructions giving of pre-consultation tests for Renal patients

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BACKGROUND

Patients under follow up for Renal conditions often require extensive urine and blood tests for physicians to follow up on their condition. In SGH, each renal physician sees an average of **20 to 25 patients** per session.

With the extensive urine and blood tests, staff assisting doctors during consultation often have to spend **5 to 10 minutes** giving instructions to patients for their pre-consultation tests.

Patients who have follow up appointments between 6 to 12 months later tend to forget the instructions they were given for their pre-consultation tests. The clinic receives approximately **5-10 calls or enquiry** from patients **daily** for clarifications.



Staff giving patient instructions for their next pre-consultation tests

AIM

Reduce time taken for consultation room assistants in giving patients instructions for pre-consultation investigation tests for their next appointment

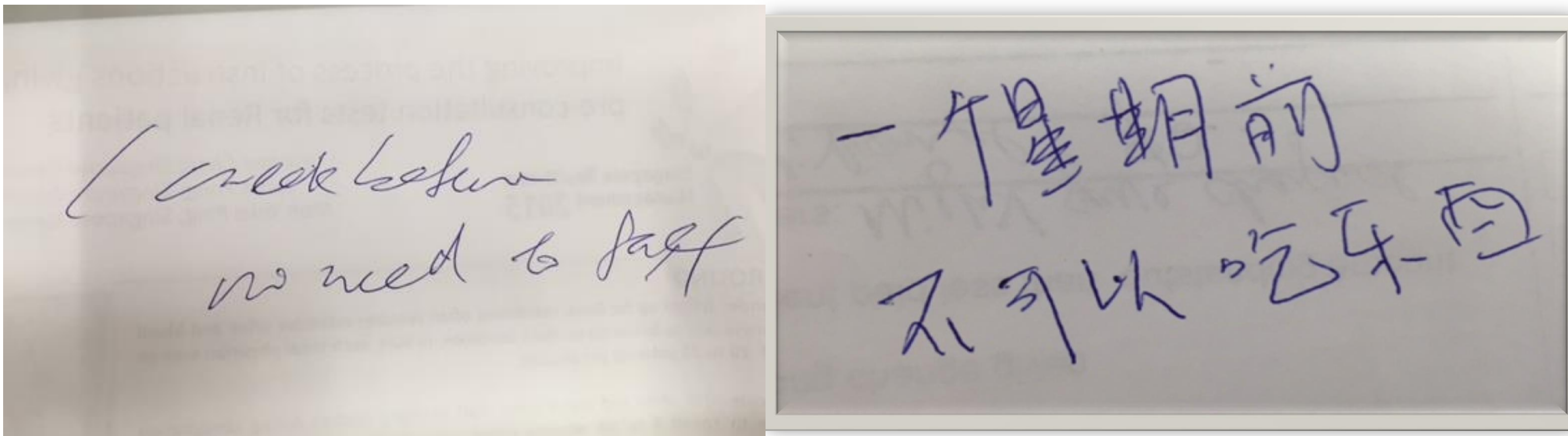
METHODOLOGY

- Observation** was done in the clinic over a one week period. It was observed that clinic assistants often rush in between patients due to the amount of time spent on explaining the pre-consultation investigation tests. Staff also tend to scribble the instructions on the test forms. However, the handwriting are sometimes illegible and patients may misread the instructions. It was also observed that 100% of the patients require pre-consultation tests to be done before their next appointment.
- Troubleshooting** of the problems observed discovered that the key solution is to provide concise and clear instructions which the patients can understand.
- Study** of the investigation tests narrowed the common instructions to:
 - When to do the blood and urine tests
 - Whether patients need to fast for the test

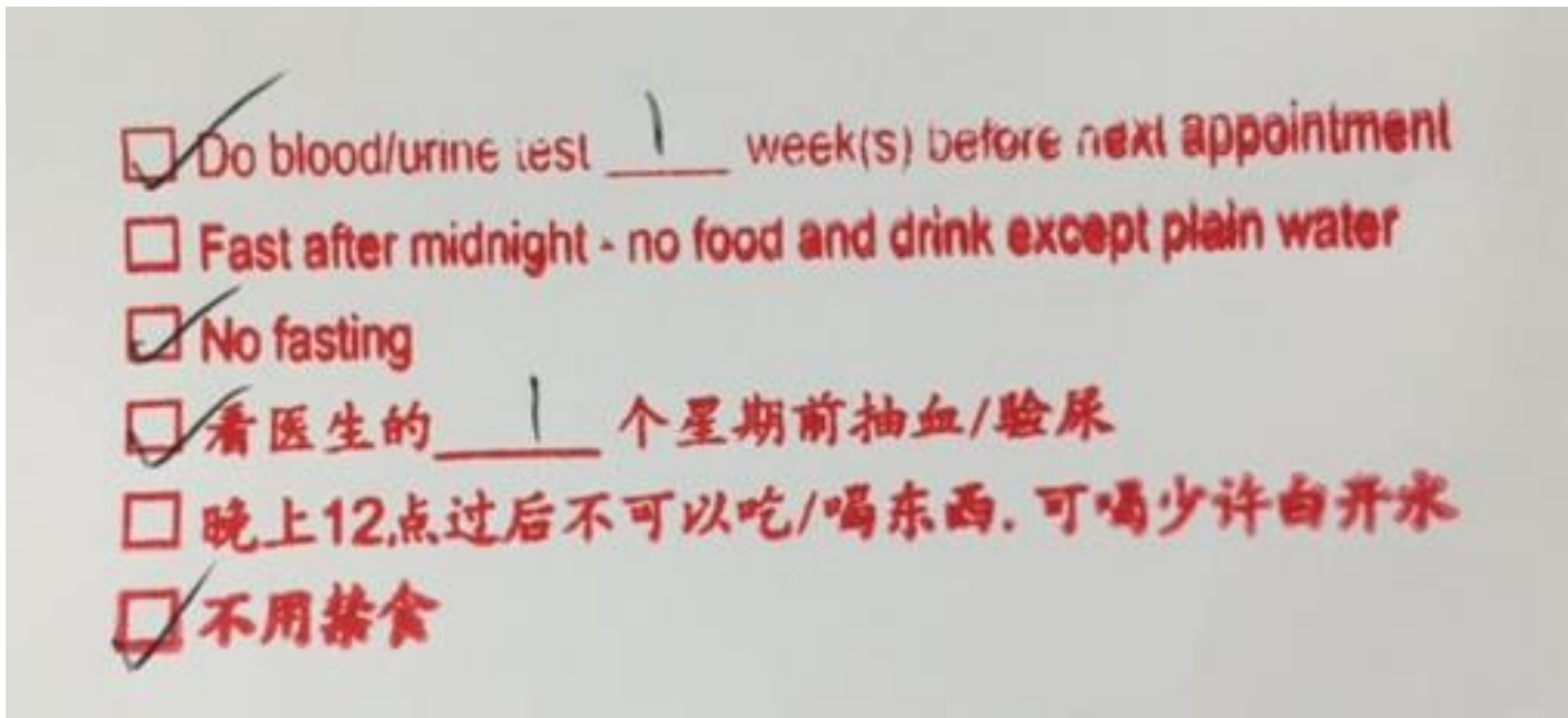
SOLUTION

A stamp with the common instructions was made to be stamped on all blood tests forms and room assistants will tick the relevant instructions for the patients.

It saves the assistant's time of explaining and writing the instructions for the patients, and also eliminate the issue of patients not being able to read illegible handwriting.



Before: Clinic assistant writes down instructions on lab tests forms. Patients sometimes find it difficult to read the handwritings and need to call back to verify.

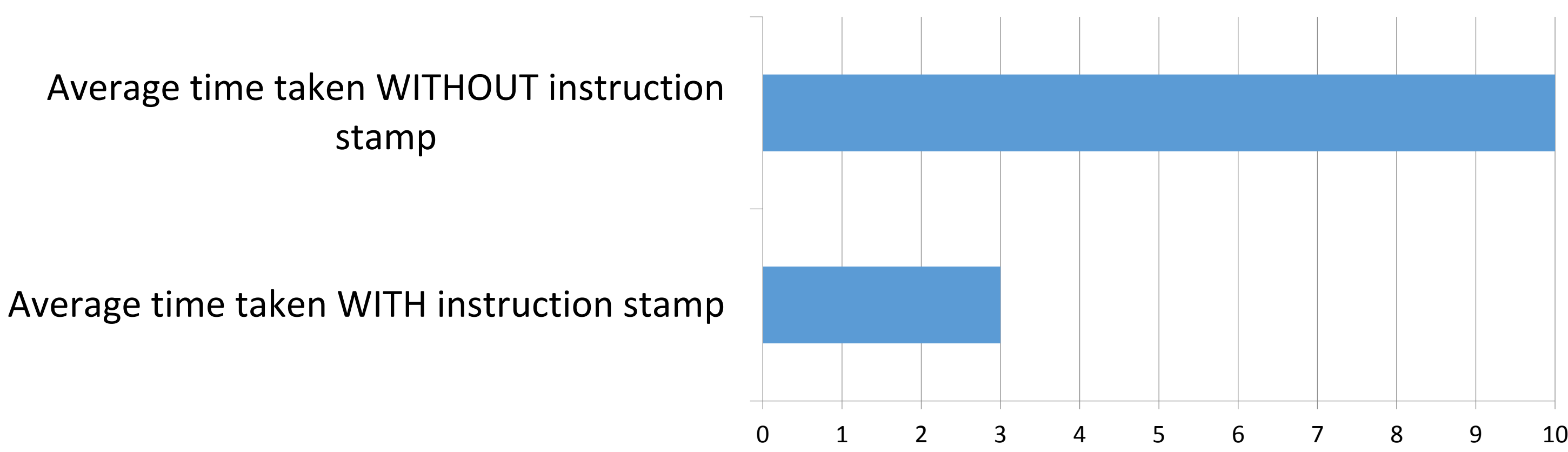


After: Clinic assistant just tick on the respective instructions, saving time trying to explain to patients verbally. Patients also are able to read the printed instructions better.

RESULTS

- Time taken for room assistants to give instructions is reduced, making the turnover during consultation for each patient more efficient.

Average Time taken for instruction giving in minutes

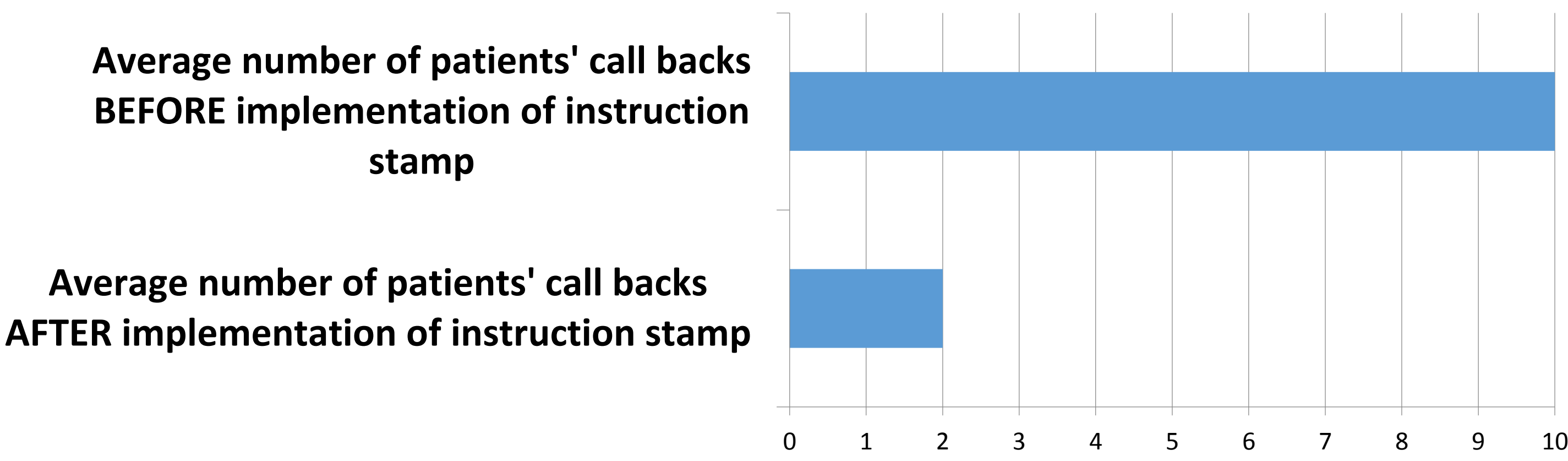


Taking into consideration that the average renal workload is 100 patients per session, total time saved per day (2 sessions per day) will be:

100 patients x (2 sessions/day) x 7 minutes =
1400 minutes

- Reduction in patients calling back to enquire about the instructions for their investigations tests

Average no. of call back from patients for pre-consultation tests instructions



Each phone call takes approximately 7 minutes, hence , total time saved per day for staff in charge will be:

8 patients x 7 minutes =
56 minutes

CONCLUSION

The instructions stamp have reduce the time taken for instructions giving and as a result, reduce the turnover time for each patient. This has help to reduce overall waiting time for consultation for patients. Patients also feel more assured of what to do for their pre-consultation tests. This initiative can potentially be rolled out for other disciplines which requires instructions for pre-consultation tests.