Daily routine made easier!

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Background

- Every morning, at the start of their duty, counter staff from the SGH Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOCs) L and M have to perform routine tasks (eg. replenishing paper in printers, switching on computers and TV, etc.) to ensure that the clinic is ready for start of operations for the day.
- Similarly, every evening, at the end of their duty, counter staff who have been assigned as cashiers for the day have to complete certain routine tasks to make sure that the clinic is in order before closure for the day.
- However, as there are several tasks to complete and as duties rotate throughout the entire staff for the clinic, staff easily forget to perform certain tasks. This results in staff having to take time to check and sometimes having to rework certain tasks.

Fig. 1. Scene of a typical counter in SGH SOC.

Aims

To reduce the amount of time spent carrying out daily tasks by 10% and reducing rework of such tasks by 20%

Methodology

- The team reviewed stakeholders' needs and expectations of facilities in SOC to determine the operational requirements and routines to run SOC L and M. Stakeholders include doctors, patients, as well as clinic staff.
- These requirements were then developed into customised checklists for staff for specific duties to follow through effortlessly and efficiently, taking into consideration the accessibility and simplicity of the checklists.
- An example of a checklist is on the right (Fig. 2). It shows at a clear glance the various tasks that different rostered staff needs to perform at the start/end of their duties. Once completed, the staff just needs to check off the tasks on the list.

SOC L		
Duty of clerk starting at 8 am assign to counter	**Tick for done**	**Remarks**
Switch on the computers, photocopy machine and TV		
Ensure the queue panels and Self Registration kiosk are working		
Top up paper for photocopy machine, printers, superbills and sticky label		
Put clinic chop on the newspapers		
Ensure that counter area is clean and tidy		
Top up the pamphlets and feedback forms		
Registration 1 help with Self Registration Kiosk		
Bring out the stamps		

Duty of clerk starting at 9am assign to Cashier	**Tick for done**	**Remarks**
Take Cash Float		
Logon Nets Machine		
Check stock for Teebag and Non-Cash Envelope		
Change money for float for the next day after 4.30pm		
Switch off TV, photocopy machine and the computers and Q system switch end of the day		
File in PFS, Bill cancellation, Payments cancellation, Cancellation of Registration and Walk Off List		
Tidy up the counter area		
Put plain paper at the printer for the auto print of doctor's list		

Fig. 2. Checklist for SOC L rostered staff

Results

- After the implementation of the checklists, staff reported that they are more efficient, productive, and able to do more during their working hours (Fig. 3).
- The checklist also helps deployed or new staff to follow up on the required duties and tasks with ease.
- Staff noted that the time taken to ensure that they have completed all their tasks dropped from an initial 20 minutes to 15 minutes per staff after using the implemented checklist, demonstrating a 25% reduction in time spent by staff (Fig. 4).
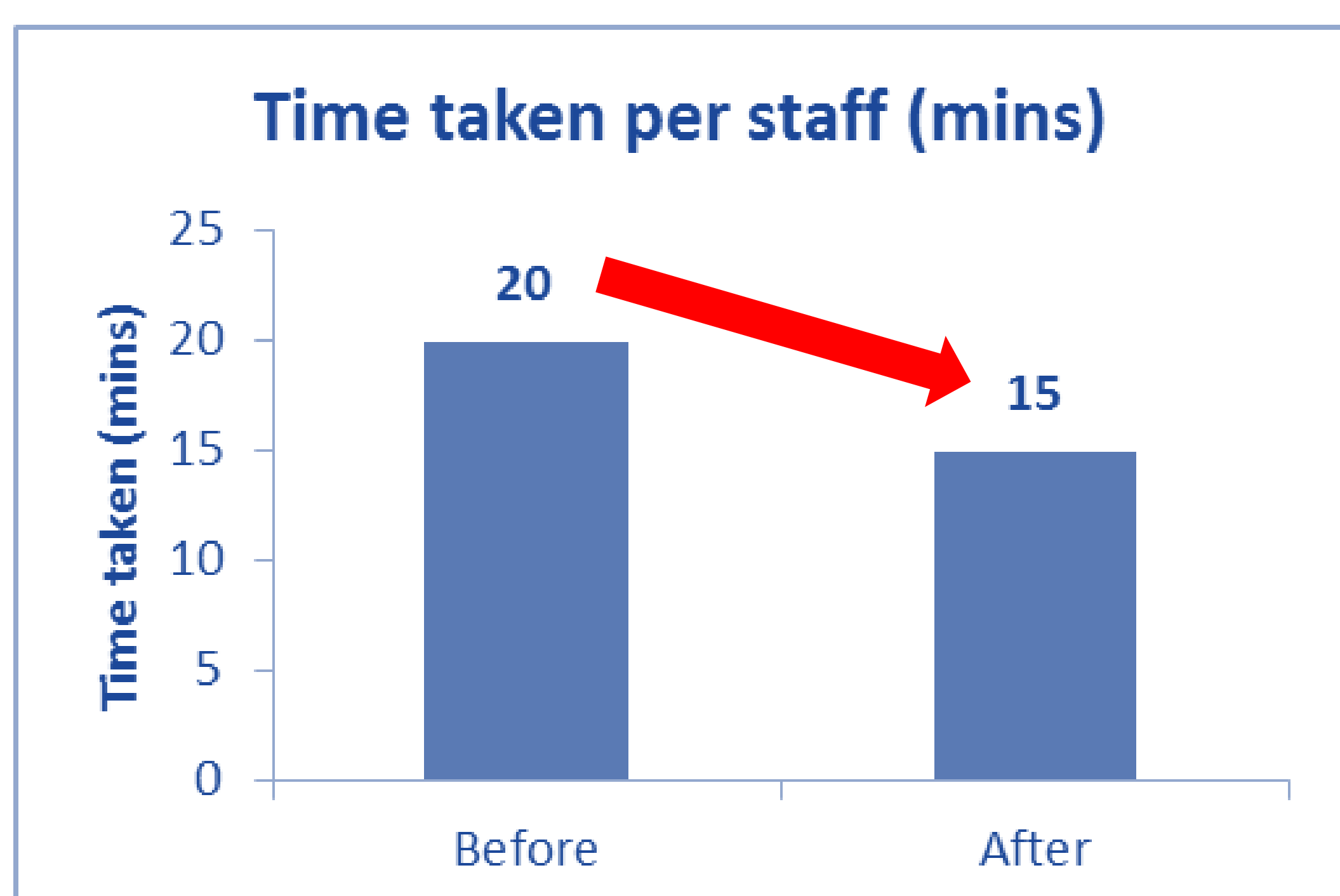

Time taken per staff (mins)
20 → 15

Fig. 4. The time taken by each clinic staff to complete the tasks decreased from 20 mins to 15 mins, reflecting a 25% decrease in time spent by staff.

"I'm happier as with the checklist, I do not have to remember the repetitive tasks that I need to do. I feel more efficient and productive."

"I am able to think clearly and do more when I am working in the clinic. No longer confused!"

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Fig. 3. Positive remarks from some of the clinic staff regarding the new implemented checklist.

Conclusion

- In an effort to improve efficiency at SOC, the use of checklists can greatly help clinic staff to carry out their work with enhance accuracy, greater ease, and increased confidence.
- Minor initiatives like implementation of the checklist can nevertheless produce beneficial effects. The results have shown that the checklist initiative is able to translate to a more efficient, productive workforce, with improved patient and staff satisfaction.