



**Singapore Healthcare Management 2016**

# Inpatient Wards Health Attendant (HA) Job Redesign



**Tan Tock Seng HOSPITAL**

Cheryl Lim, Koh Sai Fong, Wang Xun Wu, Tay Kok Beng, Leo Yui Thim, Joycelyn Sin, Wong Mui Peng, Laura Ho, Nirmala Bte Karmaroon, Kunjuraman Suvaseni, Issac S/O Asirvatham, Gary Tan, Lillian Yeo, Tan yen Cheng, Lynette Ong, Benjamin Seto  
(Tan Tock Seng Hospital)

## Our Health Attendants and the challenges

The Health Attendant (HA) is an integral part of our healthcare workforce. In the wards, HAs spent much of their time preparing and serving meals and beverages, clearing soiled linen and assisting with a wide spectrum of ad-hoc duties such as portering of patients and collection of medication – all mundane but essential activities that our patients value.

The Shrinking and aging local workforce, tightening of the foreign labour quota and increasing outsourcing cost amongst HAs have brought about pressure in cost and manpower availability. There is a critical need to review the job of HAs and streamline work processes and improve productivity.

## TTSH VSA + Innovation Cycle

A team comprising of Hospitality & Environmental Services, Nursing, F&B Services, Linen Services and Kaizen came together to review and redesign the work processes of HAs.

A Value Stream Analysis (VSA) methodology was used to identify and reduce waste to facilitate redesign of work processes to boost productivity and bring values to patients, aligned with TTSH Innovation Cycle.



## Aim

The inpatient wards HA job redesign project aims to improve productivity by overhauling the entire HA service delivery process, optimising the overall efficiency and productivity of all stakeholders while providing an age-friendly working environment for HAs.

## Achievements thus far.....

- **23** saved per annum (17.5 FTE savings have been actualized with the remaining to be completed by end 2016)
- **Better patient satisfaction and experience**
- **Better patient care**
- **Increased patient empowerment**
- **Strengthened staff identity**
- **Happier staff with defined and value-adding roles**
- **Increased staff longevity**

### 1. Care & Process Redesign – through patient empowerment

**Self return meal trays**

Self-return meal tray concept as a unique occupational lifestyle rehabilitative therapy allowing patients to learn independence.

**Convenience Pack**

Patient given personalized cutlery, jug and cup, thus reducing collection and washing time, reducing losses, and improving hygiene and infection control.

↑ Value

### 3. Job Redesign – role expansion and better utilization of resources

**Kitchen Coordinator**

Kitchen Coordinator role was created to oversee ration supply and beverage machine operations.

**HA Resource Pooling**

HA resources are pooled centrally to execute day-time ad-hoc and urgent portering tasks, translating into quicker response time and improved productivity by 23%.

**Mobile Team**

Mobile teams are formed to execute dedicated night-time tasks – “Starry Team” for patient transfer, “Night Sitter” to prevent falls, and “Courier Team” for ad-hoc and urgent tasks.

↓ Waste

### 2. Automation, IT, Robotic Innovation - making work easier

**Beverage machine**

Beverage machines are used in the wards, helping to quicken preparation by 75% while ensuring consistency in taste, temperature and quality of beverages; reducing complaints by 100% in the pilot trial in 6 wards.

**Water dispenser**

Water dispensers are installed for patients and NOKs to self help, reducing time spent by HAs to refill water by 20%. Staff could spend more time engaging patients and improving communications, hence improving overall patient care.

**Linen collection**

Redesigned linen bag with improvised strap, shortening linen collection time by 76%.

↓ Cost

## Conclusion

A multi-disciplinary workgroup, together with Kaizen Office, utilised lean methodologies to review and transform the HA services, with change management being critical in managing the process. The improvements effectively impacted the entire HA service delivery chain, estimated to achieve up to manpower savings of 23 outsourced FTEs per annum over a period of 2-year implementation timeline. The job redesign resulted in job specialisation, job rotation and upskilling of staff, allowing this group of “Silver Workforce” to increase their job longevity.