



**Singapore Healthcare Management 2016**

# Improving Experience for Patients with ONE Admission Guide for Surgery



Sengkang Health  
SingHealth

Lua Seok Bian, Deborah Ng, Diana Goh, Siti Mariam Binte Mohamad Salim, Daphne Ng, Geetha D/O Chandrasagaran, Mac Quek, Renee Seow, Thomas Kwan, Colin Loh

Surgery is often an intimidating and anxiety-laden experience for most people. On hearing the news, the consultation room suddenly seems to become smaller and what the doctor says may sound like an entirely different language.

Adding to the trauma of worry, the patient has to undergo various pre-admission testing procedures as well as deal with an inundation of information on the hospital stay and financial counselling. The anxiety and information overload is definitely a less than optimal situation for an individual who is about to head into the operating theatre. Managing information presented to them in different formats may cause patients more stress even before they enter the operating theatre.

With the commitment of "Patients. At The Heart of All We Do", various departments from Sengkang Health (SKH) - Service Quality, Nursing, Admissions Office, Business Office, Specialist Outpatient Clinics, Medical Social Services, and Communications - embarked on the project of looking at the admission procedure through the perspective of the patient experience. By applying the principles of design thinking, we realised that we can streamline the generous amount of essential information provided by the different departments which the patient needs to note and keep in mind before admission for surgery and make it easier to handle and more understandable.

INTRODUCTION

## STAGE 1

### EMPATHISE & DEFINE

- Our team focused on the patient's experience and process to comprehensively understand the challenges faced by our patients during the admissions process. At the same time, we needed to understand the various internal stakeholders involved in providing services to patients at different touch points i.e. Financial counselling, Pre-Admission Testing, Pre-Operative Evaluation etc.
- Our investigation involved observation and shadowing of 8 patients as well as our staff while they performed their duties in ensuring the patients received the appropriate information and services.
- We made observations of the entire admissions process and noticed that the bulk of information were provided on loose pieces of papers and patients had to fiddle constantly with the loose pieces. Sometimes, information was conveyed verbally and had to be repeated.

## STAGE 2

### IDEATE

- From our findings on the challenges confronted by the patients/staff during the processes, we brainstormed constructively to encourage creative thinking, openness and collaboration.
- Some key questions, include "How might we make the journey meaningful for our patients", "How might we streamline each of the processes" were asked.
- We broke down the problems to more manageable bite sizes and explored a wide range of ideas for problem solving.
- From this, we decided to focus our efforts on streamlining of information for patients by consolidating various hardcopies and verbal communication into one easy-to-understand admission guide for surgery.

## STAGE 3

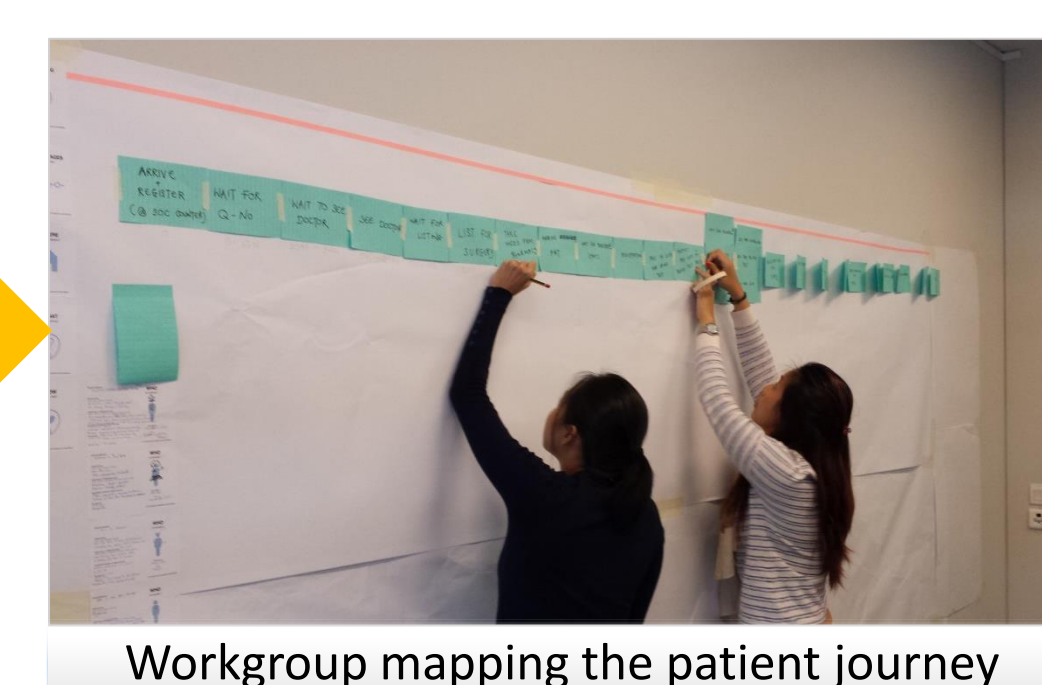
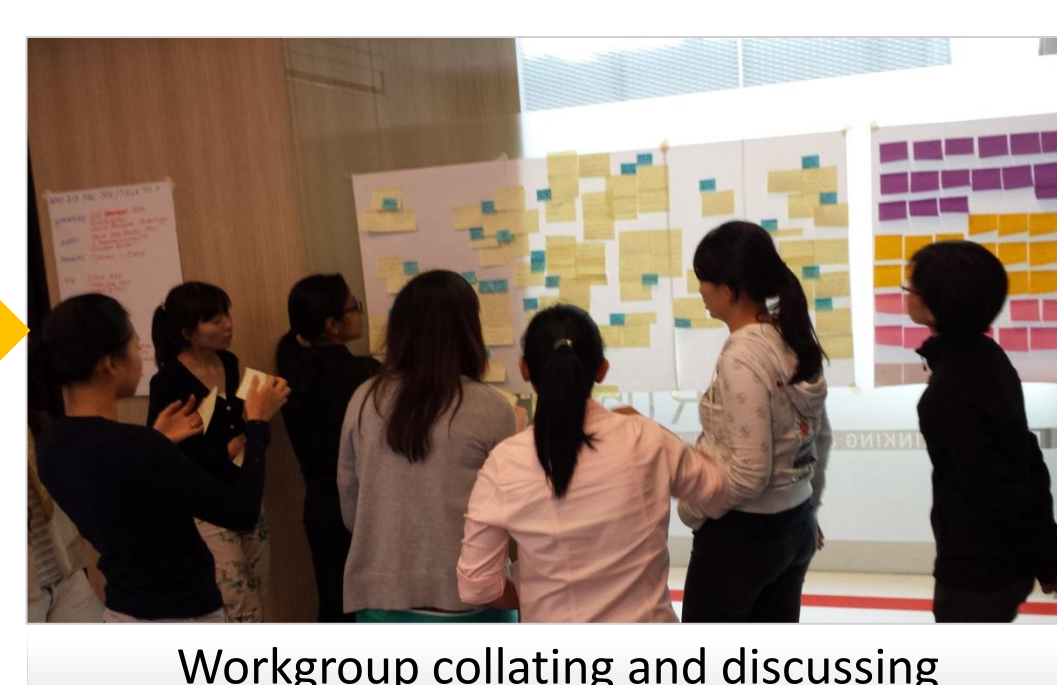
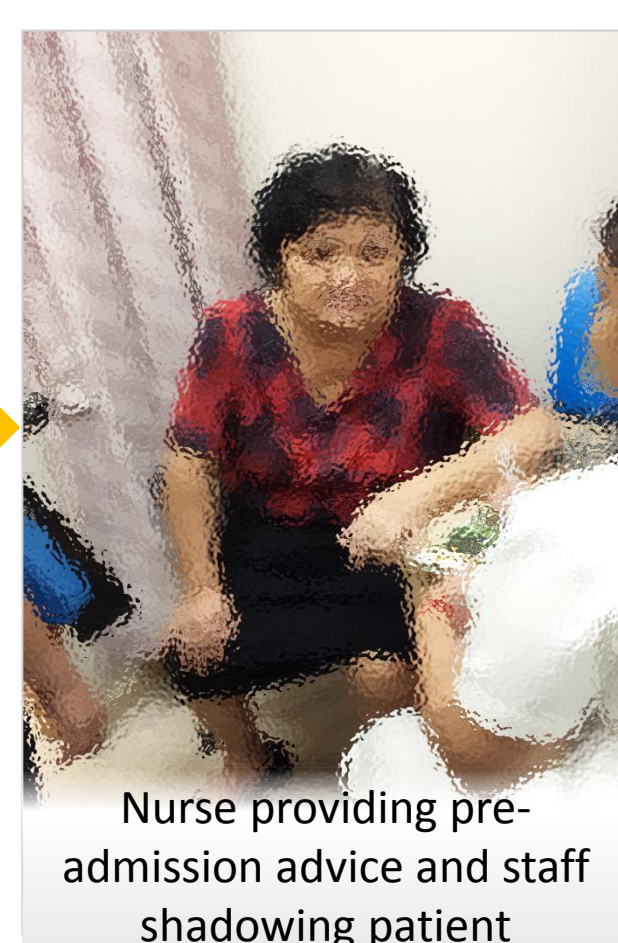
### PROTOTYPE & TEST

- At this stage, our team designed a prototype admission guide to gather feedback from departments outside the workgroup.
- This feedback helped our teams to evaluate and further understand how a user interfaces with the information flow in the admission guide.
- The final product went through several reviews and evaluations before it was launched.
- A 2-D visual prototype of the Admission Guide was put together to define the appearance, iterate the design and layout of the guide and eventually served as a base for refinement to the final product.

METHODOLOGY

## Illustration of Design Thinking Methodology

Journey of an Elderly Patient Accompanied by Her Relative for Pre-Admission Testing / Pre-Operative Evaluation



References from other restructured hospitals issuing the Admission Guide to the patients prior to their surgery. Breakdown of items and estimated printing costs.

- Admission folder & booklet: \$1.40
- Patient information for Same Day Admission/Ambulatory Surgery Centre patients: \$0.15
- Our Commitment to Patients: \$0.19
- Preparing for Surgery (Anaesthesiology): \$0.35
- 7-steps hand-washing: \$0.14
- Fall prevention advice: \$0.03
- Pain Education Checklist: \$0.15
- Discharge information : \$0.50

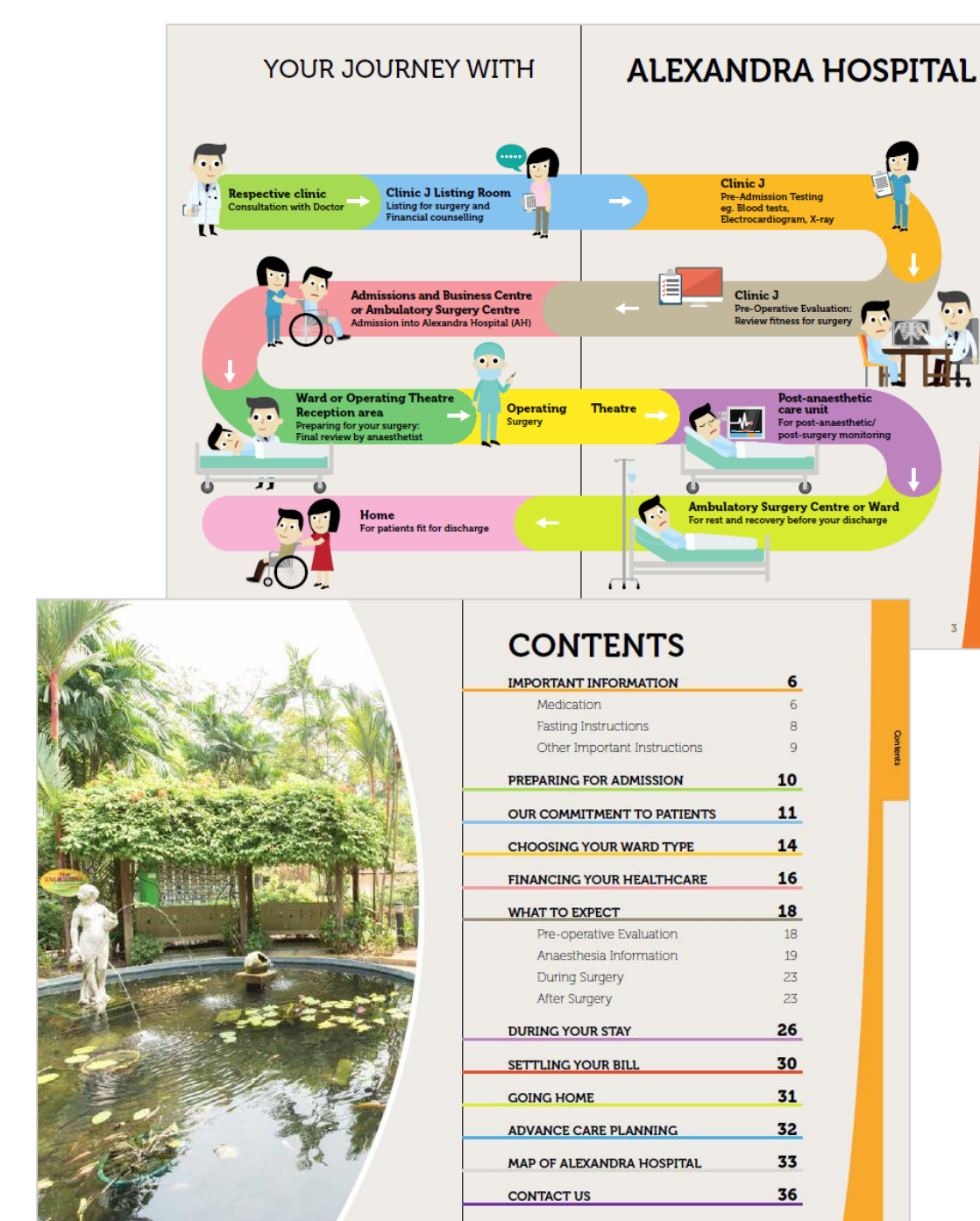
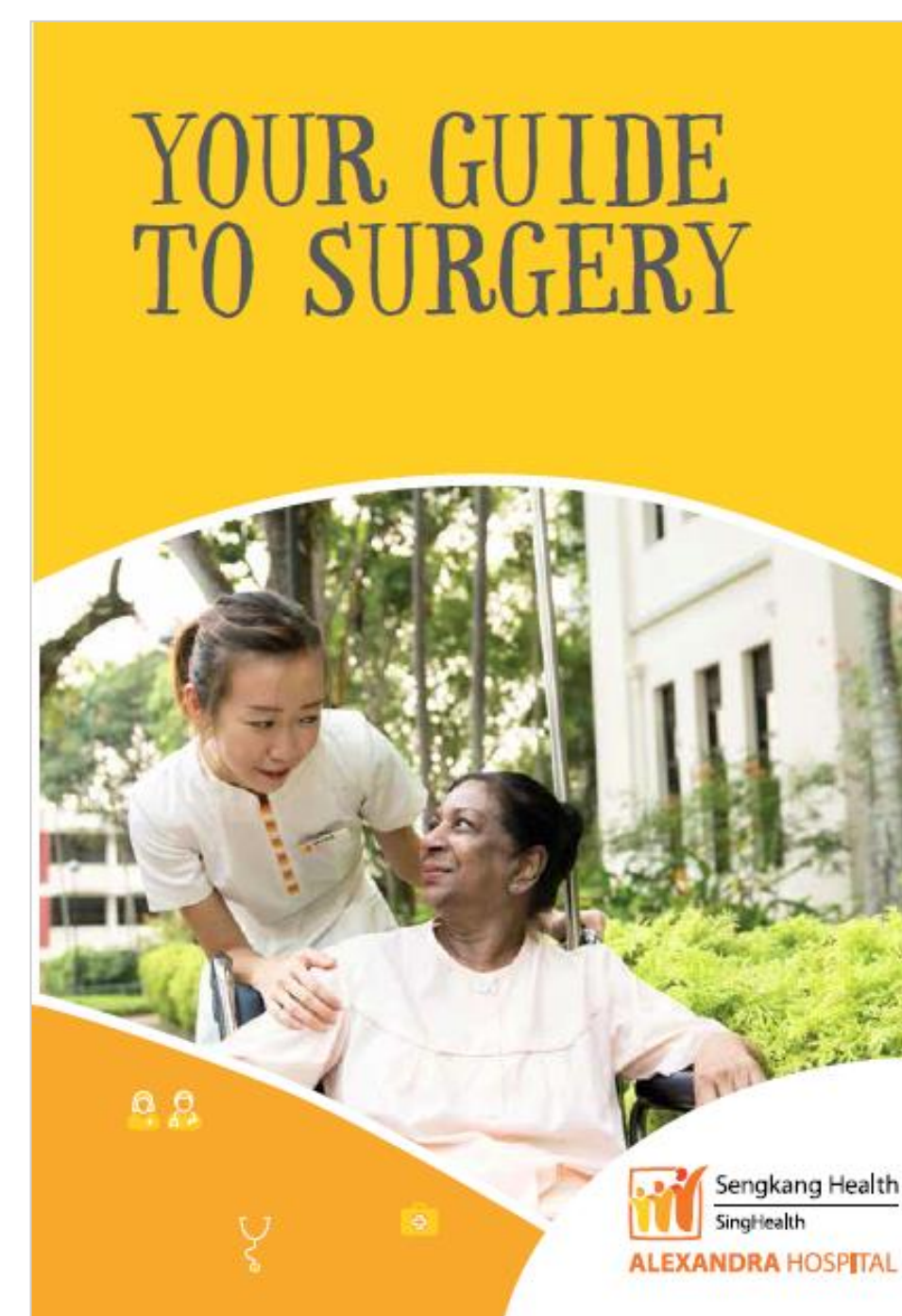
**TOTAL COST: \$2.91 PER SET**

After streamlining and re-designing our Admission Guide, Sengkang Health patients now receive one comprehensive guide that costs **\$1.30 per set.**

In comparison with other Admission Kit that consists multiple forms and papers of information, **WE ARE ABLE TO SAVE (\$2.92 - \$1.30) = \$1.62 PER SET.**

Sengkang Health estimates its workload of 24,900 surgeries in year 2018. Taking that into consideration, the Surgery Guide distribution can potentially save us: **24,900 x \$1.62 = \$40,338.**

We are also able to convert space in the clinics to hold other items such as medical equipment and tools, and to allow bigger working space for the staff.



RESULTS

### PATIENT FEEDBACK

Overall patient feedback results were obtained by interviewing a random selection of our patients face-to-face. 100% of the patients 'Strongly Agreed' that the Surgery Admission Guide is clear, useful, and informative for pre and post operative care

### STAFF FEEDBACK

We also interviewed our PSAs and all agreed that it is a more efficient process for them.

### CONCLUSION

The new admission guide, with comprehensive, concise and relevant content in a simplified design, serves to prepare patients and help them understand what happens before their surgery, during their hospitalisation and post-hospitalisation follow up appointments.

The results and benefits are aligned with SKH's quality commitment to ensure an informed, holistic and reassuring service delivery to our patients through a collaboration effort between patients and staff.

Summary of benefits:

- Cost savings
- Better use of hospital resources

- Increased patient satisfaction – from our survey, 100% of the patient strongly agreed that the admission guide is useful and met their expectation.
- Increased staff satisfaction

### MOVING FORWARD

The guide can be translated into other languages, for example, Chinese, Malay and Tamil.

The Design-Thinking methodology can be applied to steer other projects and initiatives.

CONCLUSION