



Reduction of Patient's Waiting Time and Improvement to Management of Medical Social Workers' (MSWs) Outpatient Clinic Schedule in Changi General Hospital Medical Social Services (MSS)

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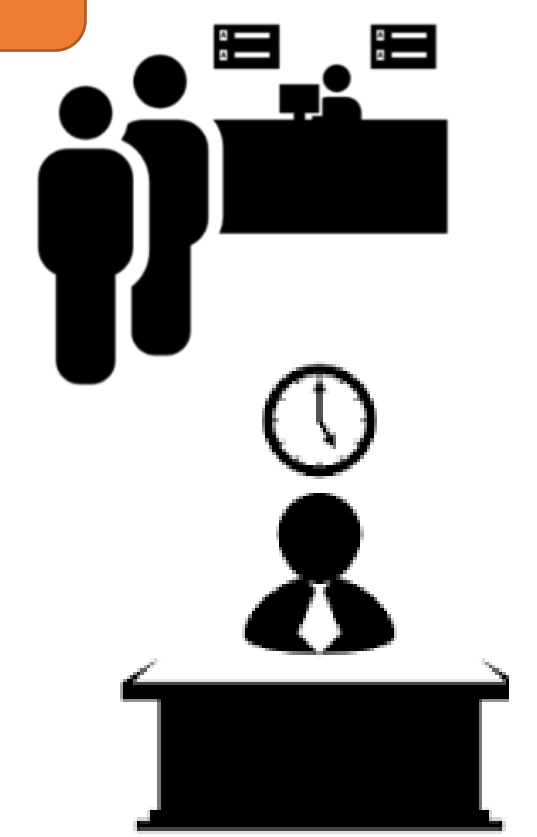
Introduction

The Outpatient MSWs serve patients who have difficulties related to financial, caring for their frail family members, adjustment to their conditions and relationships with others.

MSS collaborated with NUS Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering from August 2014 to April 2015 to improve the service quality.

Objectives

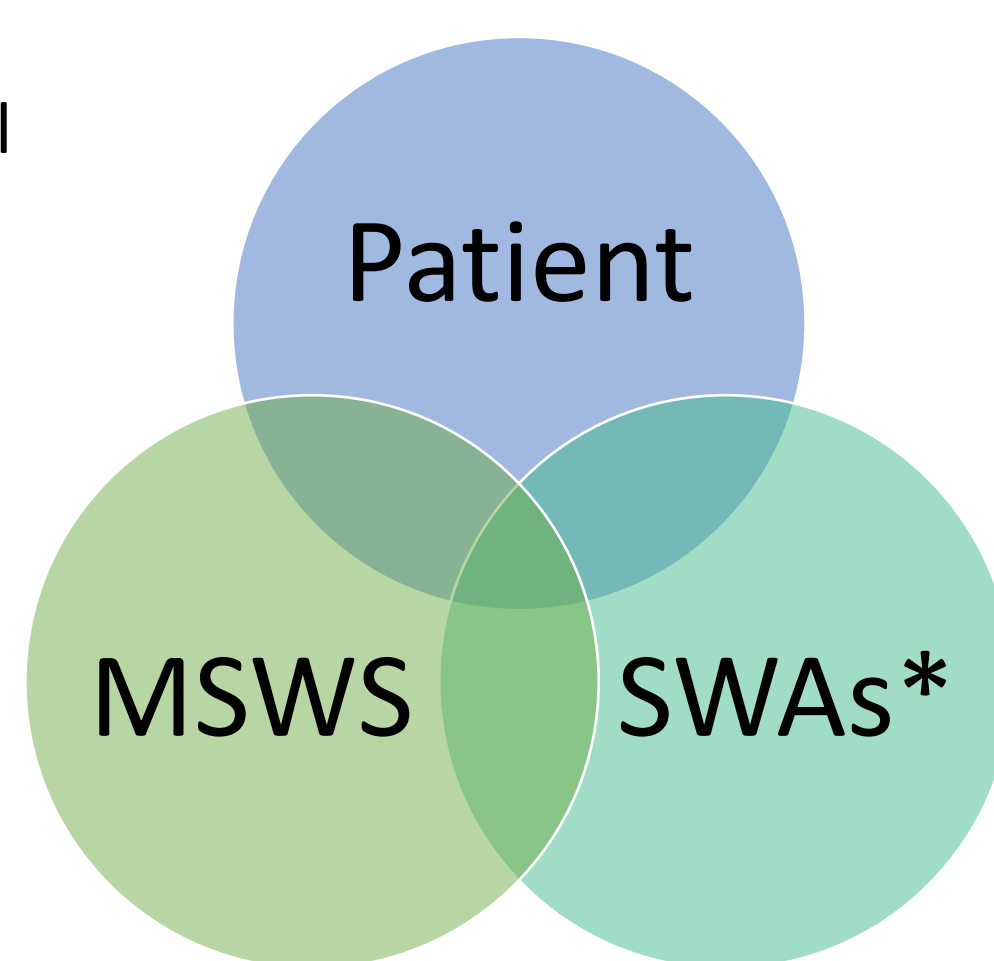
- Reduce patient's waiting time to see MSWs.
- Improve the clinic productivity through streamlining the work process.



1. Identification of Stakeholders & Issues

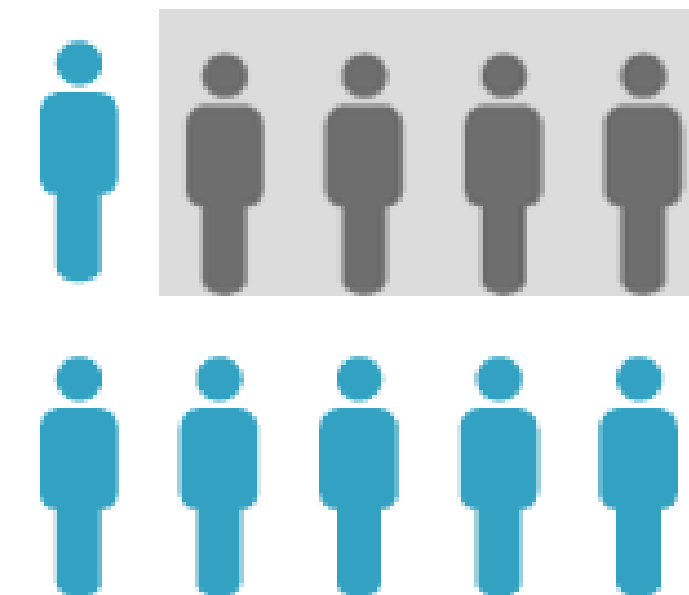
Issues

- (i) Highly variable patients' arrival rate
- (ii) Staff schedules result in clinic hours not being maximized



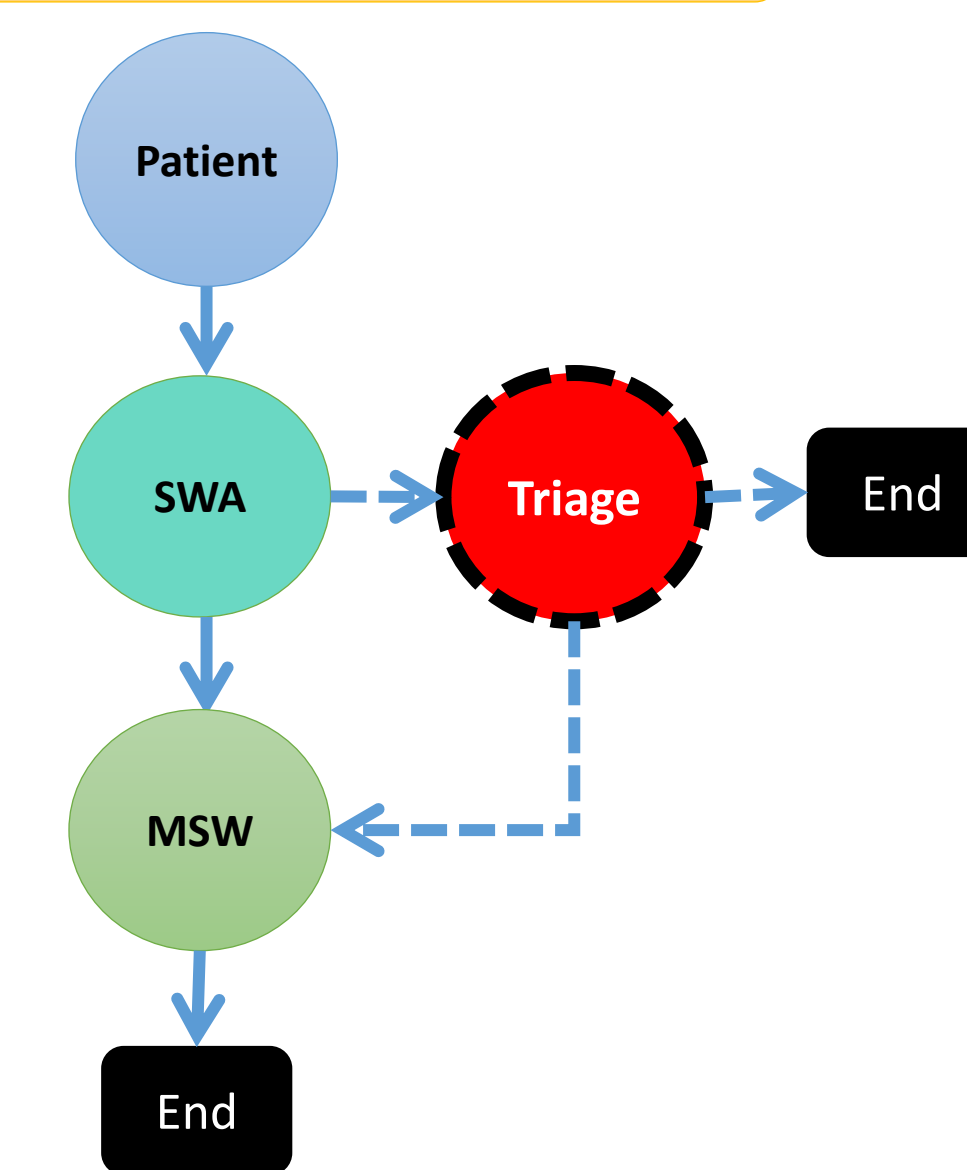
*Social Work Assistants

3. Analysis and Findings



Staff divided into strict consultation and administrative schedules.

Simulation results show that such distinction did not maximize clinic utilization and patient has longer waiting time to be attended by MSWs.



Review of the Outpatient work processes suggest the advantage of having a Triage service.

5. Post Implementation Study

Data collection (n = 4068) to monitor patients' waiting time. (Conducted from April 2015 to December 2015 to evaluate the change that was implemented in April 2015).



2. Data collection

Quantitative

CGH Social Work Information System (SWIS) (n = 13770)

Outpatient Appointment System (OAS) (n = 3799),

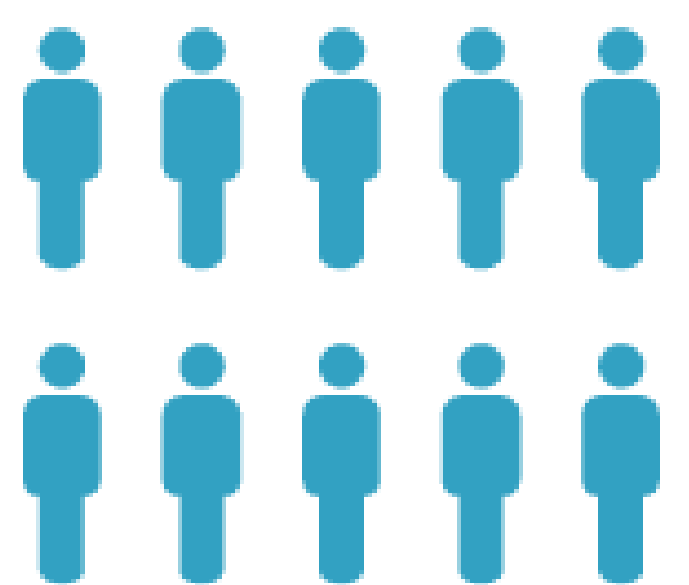
Qualitative

Patients' survey (n = 60)

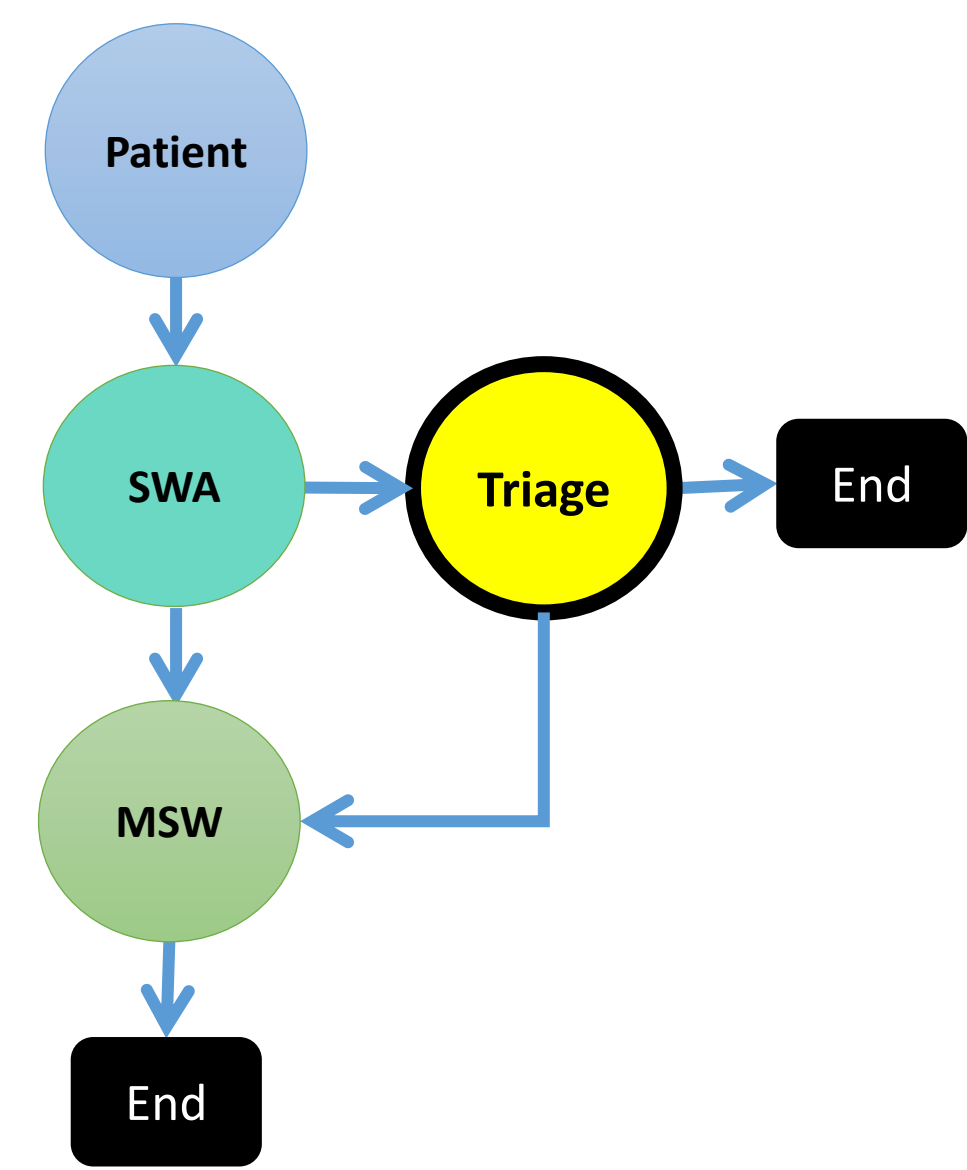
Reviewing the Outpatient work processes

simulation

4. Changes Introduced



Integration of dedicated documentation time into MSW's clinic schedule and having all MSWs on duty every day. (Implemented in April 2015).



Expansion of SWA's role through implementation of the Outpatient Triage counter. (Implemented in March 2016).

Result



Decrease in patient waiting time by nearly **30%** through the new work process.



The number of patients that can be seen at any point of time has increased by **40%**, thus, improving clinic productivity.

Conclusion

The project took 8 months from study to implementation. The improvement to the MSW's schedule reduced patient's waiting time and resulted in better patient experience.

The expanded SWA's role reduced MSWs' time spent on administrative duties and allowed them to focus on providing quality consultation sessions for the patients.