

# From *Serve* to *Self-Serve*



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PATIENTS. AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.

Members of the SingHealth Group



# A Typical Patient Visit Flow

# PAST



- Walk-in for all services
- Manual Processes
- Paper-based
- Segmented

# Patient experience

## The total patient experience counts

Patient satisfaction at restructured hospitals and polyclinics extends beyond

IT TOOK all of 20 minutes for 28-year-old Lester Kok to see his specialist at a restructured hospital for a regular check-up.

But Mr Kok was left frustrated when he emerged from the hospital several hours later – hit by delays in making appointments for follow-up tests, collecting his medication, and paying his bill.

"The doctors themselves were very professional. But the wait times were the worst. It seems the hospital staff were overwhelmed by the number of patients and there was a backlog of them," said Mr Kok.

He ended up spending most of the in-between time in the hospital working remotely, instead of being able to return to his office.

Customer satisfaction at restructured hospitals and polyclinics increased strongly from 2011 to 2012, according to the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) compiled by the Institute of Service Excellence at Singapore Management University (ISES).

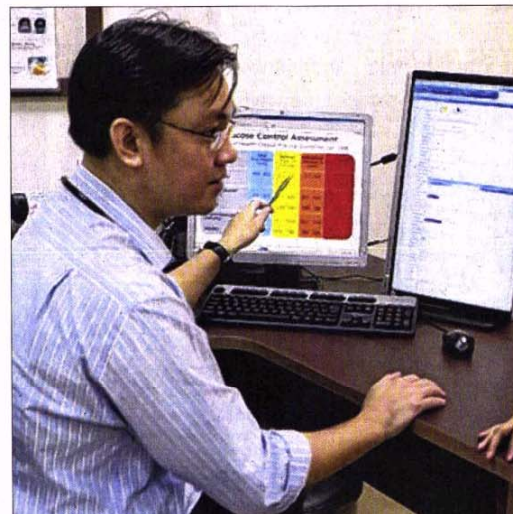
In the case of restructured hospitals, what made for a more pleasant doctor's visit was the quality of the direct interaction with nurses, doctors and administrative staff.

But where hospitals and polyclinics should strive to do better is in non-clinical areas.

When the ISES researchers followed up with respondents about their polyclinic visits, they learnt what resounded most was not the direct patient or medical care, but what would fall in the arena of non-core services. Patients thought things like the ease of making appointments, efficiency in making payments and the length of waiting times were important in their visits as well.

"The total patient experience matters to patient satisfaction," says ISES director Caroline Lim. "Besides satisfaction with doctors and nurses, we found that satisfaction with administrative staff, payment and registration processes impact a patient's overall perception of quality."

That is not to say clinical excellence does not matter.



More TLC: National Health Group Polyclinics embarked on a patient-centred 'Culture Transformation' process in 2011, a project less to do with redesigning polyclinic navigation for patients.

"I believe that clinical excellence remains the raison d'être of hospitals and medical clinics," says Ms Lim. "The challenge for healthcare providers – as with all service providers – is to design and deliver on the total customer experience. Every little detail counts."

An institution should not jump to the conclusion that all service touchpoints are equally important in the eyes of the patient.

Nor should it assume a patient's hierarchy of service wants are correlated with the strength of the CSISG scores.

For instance, respondents were more dissatisfied with waiting time (giving that a score of 5.4 points out of 10), compared with the ease in making appointments (6.6 points out of 10).

However, findings from ISES showed that ease of making appointments mattered the most to visitors as compared to waiting time, which was the eighth most important service factor to polyclinic visitors.

A hospital with limited resources would better impress its patients and visitors if it made its appointment-making system more of a breeze than shortening waiting times. And logically, doing the former might lead to shorter waiting times anyway.

Polyclinics have on the whole gained more goodwill from their patients, with their CSISG scores rising 4.5 points year-on-year to 66.6.

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) earned its higher score by embarking on a patient-centred "Culture Transformation" process in 2011, a project less to do with redesigning polyclinic navigation for patients.

### What matters to polyclinic patients

(In order of importance)

	TOUCHPOINTS	SCORE (1 to 10)
1	Ease of making appointment	6.6
2	Clarity of assistance provided by clinic staff	7.2
3	Efficiency of registration process	7.3
4	Efficiency of payment process	7.3
5	Efficiency of medication collection	7.2
6	Courtesy & helpfulness of clinical staff	7.3
7	Overall interaction with doctor	7.3
8	Waiting time	5.4
NA	Availability of seats in waiting area	7.3*
NA	Cleanliness	7.2*
NA	Ease of moving around	7.1*

\* No statistical impact

Source: Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University



# A Typical Patient Visit Flow

# NOW



# Getting a Queue Ticket

# Getting A Queue Ticket

## Numbers are pre-printed in a booklet

- Manual distribution of queue numbers
- Manual management of up to 1,000 patients
- Manage by ticket controller; no decision support tools
- Unable to know the number of people waiting in Queue



# Getting A Queue Ticket

# PAST



Collect a queue ticket



# Getting A Queue Ticket

# PAST

## Queue Machine *introduced in 2001*

- Red and Green buttons – segregate queue for consultation, women's and children's services
- Tickets for X-ray, laboratory services were issued separately

## IMPACT

- Patients were confused and pressed wrong buttons
- The different queue tickets created more confusion.



Collect a queue ticket



# Getting A Queue Ticket

# NOW



# Getting A Queue Ticket

# NOW

## Service Selection Kiosk *introduced in 2005*

- Touch-screens with 4 languages, colours and images
- System interface between Qmatic and Outpatient Admin System (OAS)
- Management of queue based on appointment, walk-in and services
- Capability for expansion to incl. speed registration etc.



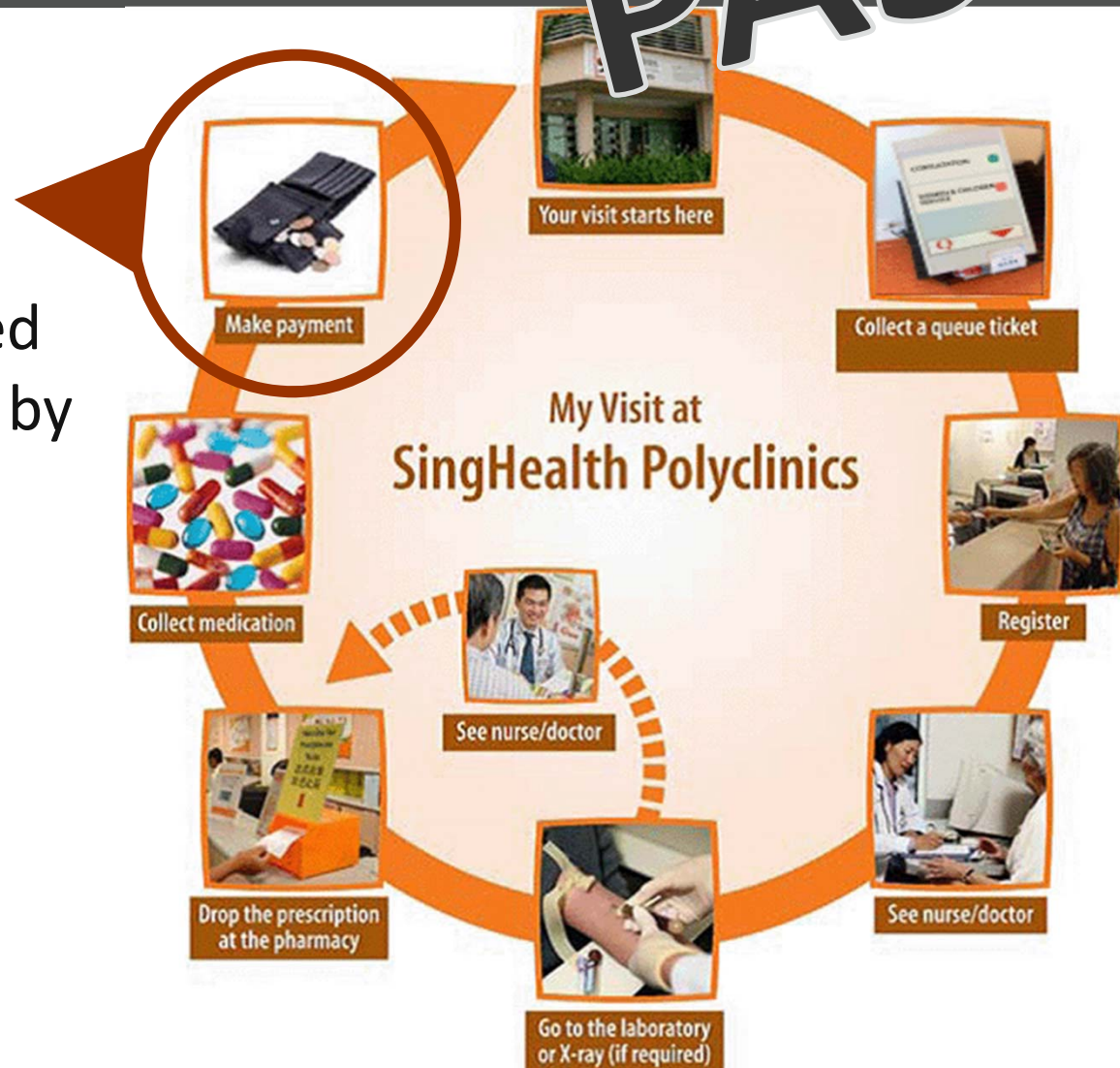
# Making Payment



# Making Payment

# PAST

- Wait for queue number to be called
- Pay at the counter by cash or NETS



# Making Payment

# NOW



# Making Payment

## Payment Kiosk *introduced in 2009*

- An option of making payment vs. queuing and waiting at payment counters
- Accepts payment by NETS & cash card

## IMPACT

- Reduce waiting time for payment – from approx. 30 minutes to 5 minutes
- Each transaction takes about 3 minutes

# NOW

**payment kiosk** Together We Care Polyclinics SingHealth

**4 Easy Steps to Pay Your Bills**  
自助付款站 四个简单的步骤来支付您的帐单

- 

Scan NRIC/  
appointment card  
扫描身份证 / 预约卡
- 

Choose payment type  
选择付款方式
- 

Insert NETS or Cash Card  
Enter pin number  
插入NETS或现金卡  
进入密码
- 

Collect receipt from the  
lower tray  
从底部的托盘里取出收据



# Making Payment

# NOW



# Making Payment – Media Coverage

LianHe WanBao, 28 November 2009

Singapore Health, March/ April 2010



## Quick and easy way to pay

Payment kiosks reduce waiting time in polyclinics

WHY WAIT WHEN YOU CAN BEAT THE QUEUE?

Settle your bill quickly and easily using the payment kiosk at SingHealth Polyclinics.

SingHealth integrates IT features into systems to enhance patients' experiences  
By Maggie Chong/Evelyn Choo, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 12 December 2009 2304 hrs

Channel News Asia, 12 December 2009

SINGAPORE: Patients and doctors at SingHealth's polyclinics can now enjoy more convenient and efficient services, thanks to the integration of new IT features.

With the installation of a payment kiosk at the Outram Polyclinic, it takes just two minutes to complete a payment. During peak hours, patients can save up to half an hour in waiting time.

SingHealth plans to introduce the kiosk to the rest of its polyclinics by the first quarter of next year.

There's also a Health Monitoring Station which measures a patient's blood pressure level and BMI. Doctors can then access this information from their desks.

Dr Joanne Quah, deputy director of SingHealth Outram Polyclinic, said: "It also gives the doctors more time to spend with a patient in terms of quality of care so that we can better communicate with the patients and plan the management for each patient."

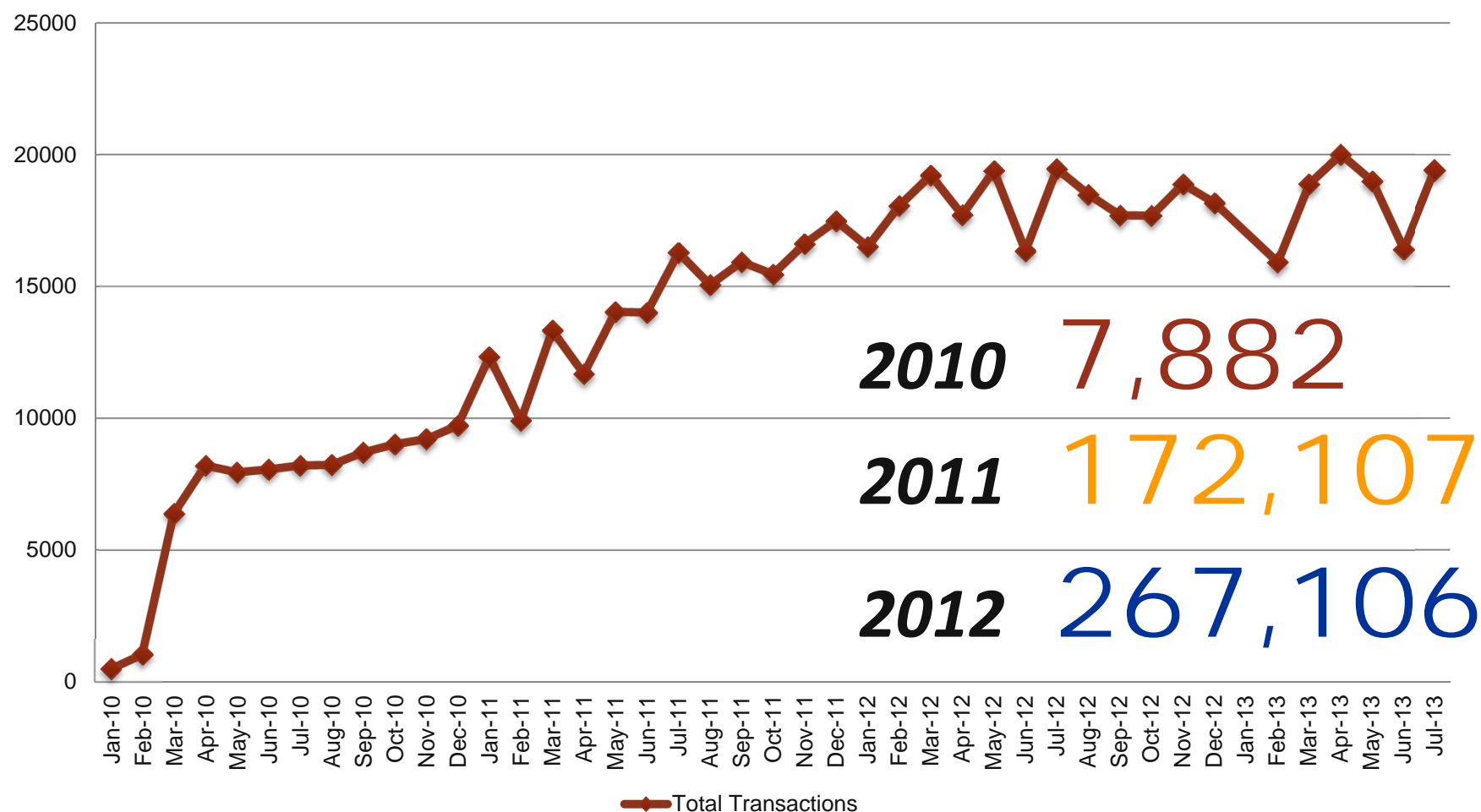


Photos

A man is using the payment kiosk at the Outram Polyclinic.

# Usage of Payment Kiosk

Year 2010 to Jul 2013





# Resource Management

## ***Organisation Impact***

- Better management of resources and staff
- Free up more staff
- Staff are redeployed to other service points

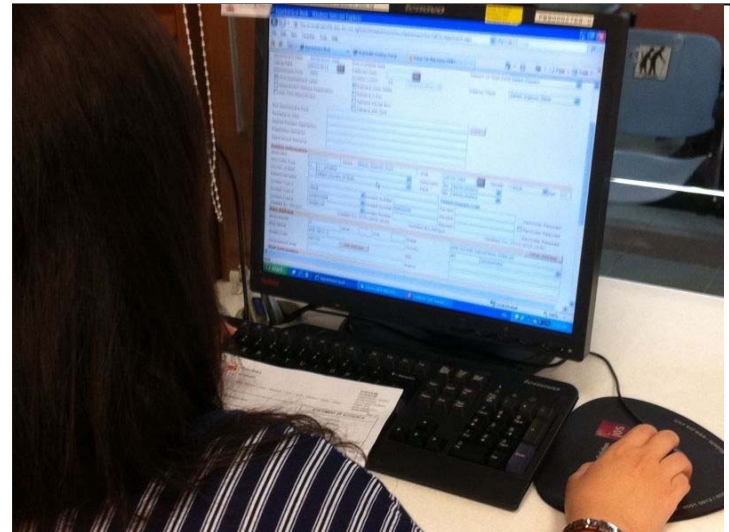


# Making An Appointment

# Making An Appointment

# PAST

- Make an appointment through a staff (nurse, patient service assistant etc)
- Wait to see the staff to get appointment





# Making An Appointment

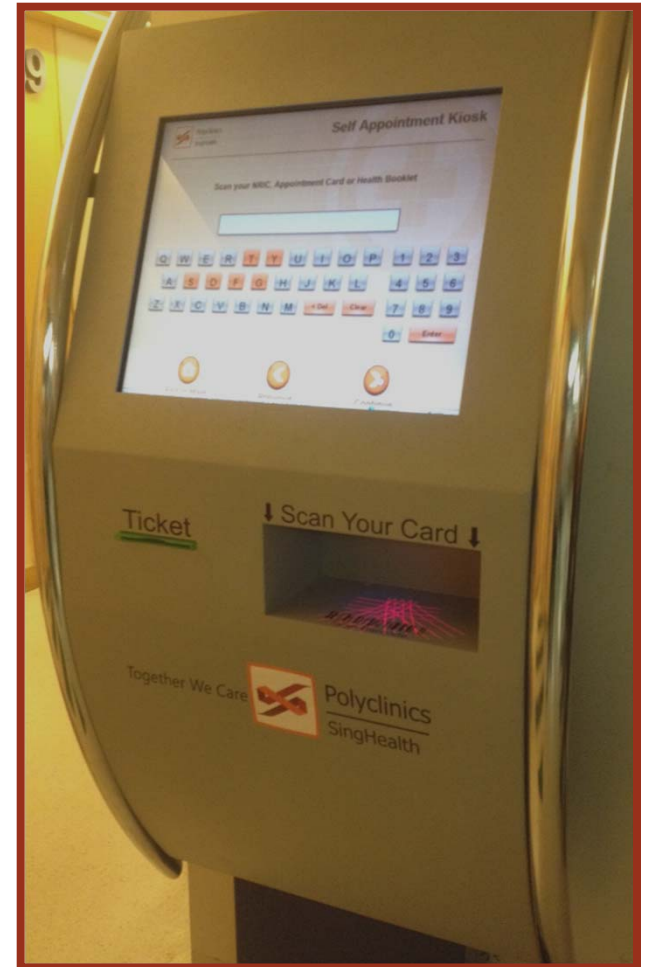
# NOW

## Appointment Kiosk *introduced in 2011*

- An option of making appointment vs. waiting for staff to assist
- Able to select date and time slot
- Book, change or cancel appointment
- SMS alert to remind of appointment 3 days' in advance

## IMPACT

- Reduce waiting time – from approx. 15 minutes to 5 minutes
- Easy to use
- Potential reduce defaulter rate



# Making An Appointment

# NOW



# Our Journey

# Self-Serve Kiosks

2005



Service Selection Kiosk

2009



Payment Kiosk

2011



Appointment Kiosk

**FUTURE PLAN**

## Enhance Self-Serve Kiosk



# Thank you



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