

Stratified Appointment System - A tool to reducing OPD waiting times in a High-volume Centre

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Introduction: Tata Memorial Centre

Tata Memorial Centre is India's Premier Cancer Treatment and Research Facility, established in 1941

Presently under Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India

Mission: To provide affordable and equitable cancer care to one an all through excellence in service, education and research.

Presence: 9 hospitals operational across India; with its flagship facility, the Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH), in Mumbai

Study Site: Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai

Annual New Cases	Annual Footfalls	No. of Doctors	No. of Specialties	OPD Rooms
70,000+	Approx. 1 mn	300	11	150

Intervention

- Introduction of Stratified OPD Appointment System:
- Categorization of Appointments into four major types of visits:

Preliminary Evaluation: Initial assessment by junior registrars

Treatment Planning: Detailed planning by senior registrars and consultants

Active Treatment: Ongoing treatment managed by consultants

Follow-up: Post-treatment check-ups by designated doctors

Dedicated Category-wise and Day-wise Time Slots and Counts fixed for each category of appointment

Unique series of Tokens introduced for each type of appointment

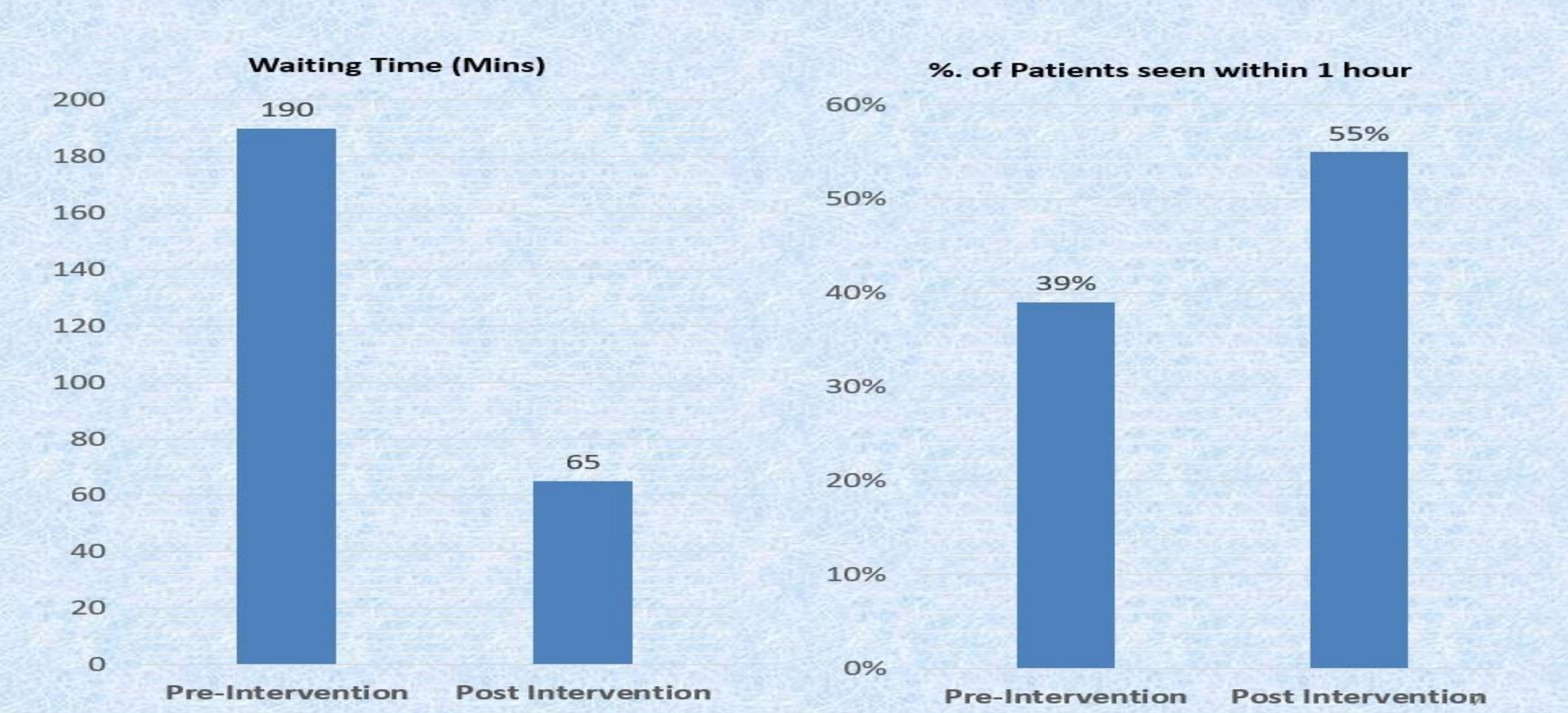
Token Display Screens installed at prominent locations

Results: Qualitative Parameters

- Increased Transparency and Reduced Waiting Time led to Improved Patient Satisfaction and Trust

Pre-planned appointments led to improved efficiency of consultations

Predictable scheduling helped doctors balance workloads better



Conclusion (1/2)

- Targeted Scheduling Reduces Waiting Times:
- Stratified appointments based on visit purpose and cancer type reduce waiting times.

Grouping similar patients optimizes resource use and streamlines patient flow.
- Stakeholder Buy-in is Crucial:
- Involving doctors, staff, and patients is essential for successful implementation.

Engagement ensures adoption and sustainability of new processes.
- Data Driven Decision making:
- Continuous Analysis, Monitoring and Feedback are crucial for success of any new system

The availability of data can be leveraged to convince the stakeholders in accepting a behavioral change

This model can be adapted for other healthcare settings by administrators facing similar challenges with data driven decision and stakeholder involvement.

Problem Statement

- Long and Unpredictable OPD Waiting Times:
- Frustration and Dissatisfaction among patients
- Intra-day and Inter-Day Workload Variation for Doctors:
- Challenges in Duty Scheduling and Time Management
- Unplanned appointment system with poor adoption:
- Arbitrary Appointments issued
- Lack of Transparency in waiting list:
- Distrust amongst patients

Methodology

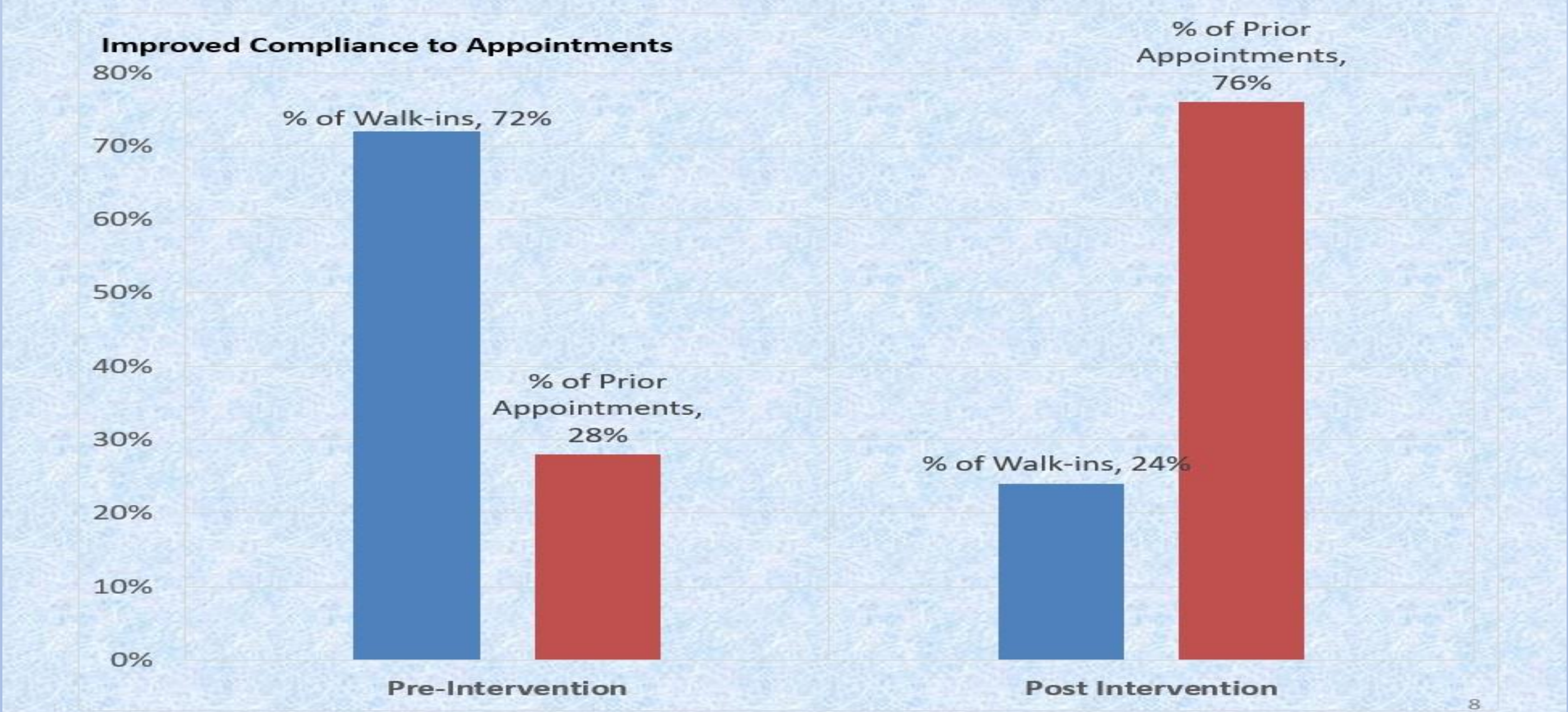
- Stakeholder Engagement
- System was devised with thorough interactions and brainstorming with all stakeholders
- Trainings
- All Staff were trained on the new process prior to actual implementation
- Patients Education
- Communication via SMSes, Posters, and Banners for information dissemination
- Pilot
- Conducted Pilot runs in select OPDs before full-scale rollout
- Feedback
- Collected feedback from staff and patients during pre- and post-implementation phases
- Continuous Monitoring
- Established metrics to monitor system performance and patient satisfaction

Results: Quantitative Parameters

- Percentage of Patients Seen Within 1 Hour: Increased from 39% to 55%

Average Patient Waiting Time: Reduced from 109 minutes to 65 minutes

Percentage of Walk-in Patients: Reduced from 75% to 25%



Conclusion (2/2)

- Transparency Builds Trust:
- Clear appointment information increases transparency, trust, and compliance.

Effective communication is key to managing patient expectations.
- Feedback Drives Improvement:
- Continuous feedback allows for timely system adjustments.

Iterative improvements ensure the system meets evolving needs.
- Effective Resource Allocation:
- Proper resource allocation manages high patient volumes efficiently.

Ensures the right expertise is available at the right time.

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