SYNOPSIS

Title: OPD Patient TAT Assessment at CARE Hospitals, Ramnagar, Visakhapatnam from March 2025 to April 2025: A Cross-Sectional Study to Identify Factors Contributing to Prolonged TAT

Introduction:

The OPD serves as the shop window for a hospital.[1] The management of the OPD department of a hospital can have a serious impact on the level of satisfaction a patient may feel. Outpatient departments should have a method to continuously monitor the type of care administered and how satisfied patients are with the administered level of care for continuous quality improvement[2]. Common concerns noted among OPD patients are about the time spent at the registration window and waiting to see the appropriate consultant[3,4]. The length of time a patient waits for a consultation can influence their use of healthcare services, with excessive wait times being seen as a barrier to service access. This can lead to feelings of stress for both the doctor and the patient. It has also been observed that in most developing nations, patients may wait up to four hours before receiving the necessary consultation[5]. Increased waiting time has been linked to lower patient satisfaction [6]. Patients invest time in waiting in order to be seen by a specialist and have their health concern resolved [5].

Research Question:

Broad-

- What is the overall TAT of the OPD, and what are the factors contributing to increased OPD TAT?

Specific-

- What is the average waiting time to arrive at the reception desk upon entering the OPD area, and what are the causes for delay?
- What is the average time required to finish the registration process, and what are the causes for delay?
- What is the average waiting time to approach the nurses' station, and what are the causes for delay?
- What is the average time taken to record vitals at the nurses' station, and what are the causes for delay?
- What is the average waiting time before entering the doctors' chamber for consultation, and what are the causes for delay?
- What is the average time taken by the doctor per consultation, and what are the causes for delay?

Objectives:

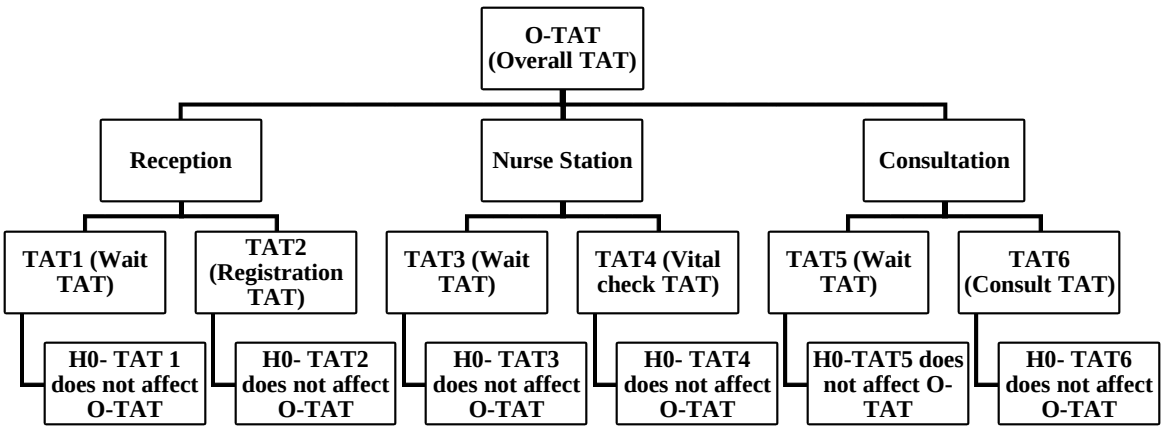
Broad:

- To assess the average overall TAT (O-TAT) of OPD and identify factors contributing to delay

Specific:

- To evaluate the mean wait period for patients in the queue to arrive at reception (TAT1) and identify sources of delays.
- To evaluate the average time required to complete the registration process and billing (TAT2) and identify factors leading to delay
- To evaluate average waiting time to approach the nurse station for vital check (TAT3) and determine the probable causes for delay.
- To evaluate the average time taken to record vitals (TAT4) and determine the probable causes for delay.
- To evaluate the average waiting time of patients before entering the doctor's consultation chamber (TAT5) and determine the probable causes for delay.
- To evaluate the average time taken by doctors to complete per-patient consultations (TAT6) and determine the probable causes for delay.

Hypothesis:



Materials and Methods:

- **Study Design**- Descriptive Cross-sectional Study
- **Study Population-**
  - **Inclusion criteria**- Cash, Credit and CGHS patients that have approached OPD for consultation from March 2025 to April 2025 from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM
  - **Exclusion criteria**-
    - Patients that had to be billed for lab investigations only

        - Patients that got asked to go to a separate facility for consultation
        - Patients that had their appointments cancelled or rescheduled
        - Patients that left the facility after taking appointment
- **Study Tools**- Observation
- **Study Duration**: 10th March 2025 to 6th April 2025
- **Sample Size**- 261
- **Sampling Technique**- Simple Random Sampling
- **Data Collection Procedure**- Each patient was shadowed with a stopwatch and recordings were made of the time of their arrival into the OPD area, the time at which they joined the reception queue, the time at which they approached the reception, the time at which their billing got concluded, the time at which they were called to the nurses station for vital check, the time at which vital check was concluded, the time at which they entered the doctors chamber for consultation and the time at which they exited the chamber following consultation.

Operational Definitions:

OPD TAT-(O-TAT)- can be defined as the total time spent by the patient from their entry into the OPD area till they exit the doctor's chamber following consultation. It includes both process TATs and Waiting TATs.[7,8]

Data Analysis Plan:

The data will be analysed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Chi-Square test will be applied as a test of significance to check for statistically significant association between the variable for overall TAT (O-TAT) and process TAT variables (TAT2, TAT4, and TAT6) and waiting TATs (TAT1, TAT3, TAT5)

O-TAT= process TAT + Waiting TAT

∴ O-TAT= TAT2 + TAT4 + TAT6 + TAT1 + TAT2 + TAT3

Ethical Considerations:

Name of hospital, city, Patient details, and staff details are not disclosed to ensure data security, privacy and confidentiality

Implications of Research:

- The organization can be made aware of main processes or areas leading to prolongation of OPD TAT
- The organization can be made aware of problems being faced by staff in management and workflows
- The organization can be made aware of problems and discomforts faced by patients in getting consultations.

References:

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