

DISCHARGE TAT AND REASONS FOR DELAY

Guided By :
Dr. S.D. Gupta
Chairman
IIHMR University

Presented By :
Aastha Bedi
MBA HM 23
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INTRODUCTION

- The word discharge is referred to the point at which the inpatient hospital care ends and the patient is either sent home or transferred to any other facility.
- The discharge process is the final step in the patient journey and hence is remembered by the patient throughout. Therefore, any delays and hassles caused in the discharge of the patient can have more effect than what can be seen superficially and ruin the entire experience for the patient and add to unnecessary expenditures for the hospital.
- **TYPES OF DISCHARGES :**
- **PLANNED DISCHARGE :** The discharge is already scheduled beforehand by the doctor and the procedure starts on the previous day itself.
- **UNPLANNED DISCHARGE:** This type of discharge occurs on the spot as advised by the doctor if the condition of the patient improves suddenly.
- **TYPES OF PATIENTS :**
- **CASH PATIENTS:** These include the patients who make the payment in cash and are not using their insurance. They should be discharged between 8am to 12pm.
- **TPA PATIENTS:** The patients who claim their insurance money at the time of discharge. They claim approval should come by 2pm to 3pm on the day of discharge.

DISCHARGE PROCESS AT MAX HOSPITAL

Discharge Intimation planned on previous night (T0)

Discharge Intimation given (T1)

Nursing Clearance (T2)

Pharmacy Clearance (T4)

Bill Preparation according to mode of payment (T5) (Cash/TPA)

Bill Settlement and discharge slip handover (T8)

Bed Release Updation (T9)

Bed Ready Updation (T10)

Can be given only if the discharge summary is ready and discharge medications have been prescribed by doctor

For TPA patients, approval from the insurance company is needed to get the claim.

RATIONALE

- Timely discharge of patients from the hospital without any unnecessary delay is of utmost importance.
- It contributes in maintaining the hospital's quality policy and also increases patient satisfaction.
- It also helps in increasing the operational efficiency of the work flow of the hospital and helps in saving time and money.
- This study aims to identify any gaps which may contribute to the delay in discharge process and also provide suggestions to reduce such gaps.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the discharge process.
- To calculate the average turnaround time (TAT) of the discharge process of cash, TPA.
- To identify the causes of delay in the discharge process and recommend measures to correct the same.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Key Research Question:** Are there any specific reasons for delay in the discharge of a patient in a private hospital.
- **Study Design :** Observational, Descriptive Cross Sectional.
- **Study Location :** Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, New Delhi
- **Sample Size :** 120 patients (60 cash and 60 TPA)
- **Sampling Technique :** Convenience Sampling
- **Data Collection Method :** Primary (Unstructured patient/staff interview) and Secondary (using HIS).
- **Tools used :** HIS for data collection and MS Excel for analysis
- **Inclusion Criteria :** IPD Patients.
- **Exclusion Criteria :** Day care patients, PSU patients and Emergency patients.

TURN AROUND TIME (TAT)

- Turnaround time (TAT) is the time interval from the time of submission/ beginning of a process to the time of the completion of the process.
- In general, TAT means the amount of time taken to complete a process.

$$\text{Average TAT} = \frac{\text{Sum TAT of all patients}}{\text{Total number of patients}}$$

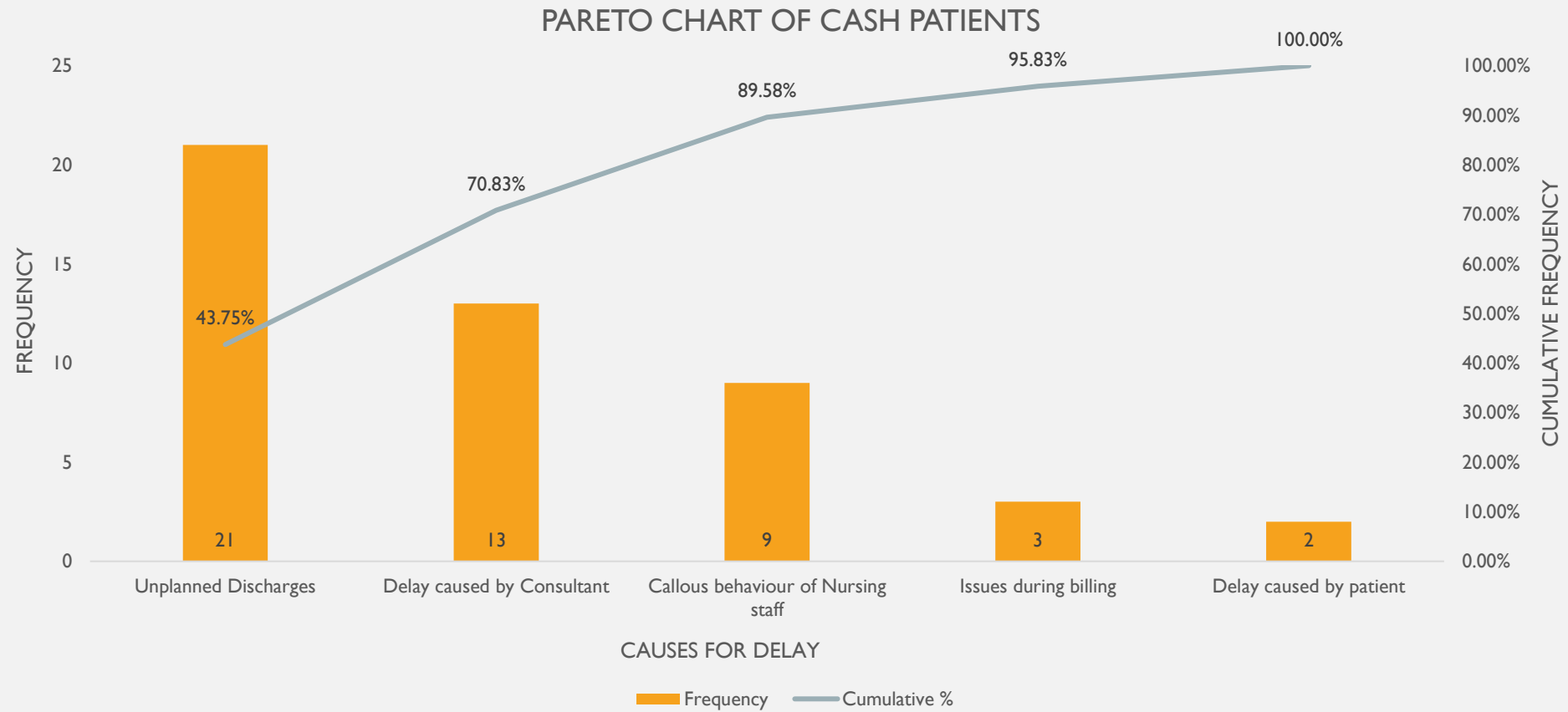
- Ideal TAT for cash patients(As per SOP) = 75 minutes Ideal
- TAT for TPA patients (As per SOP) = 169 minutes

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

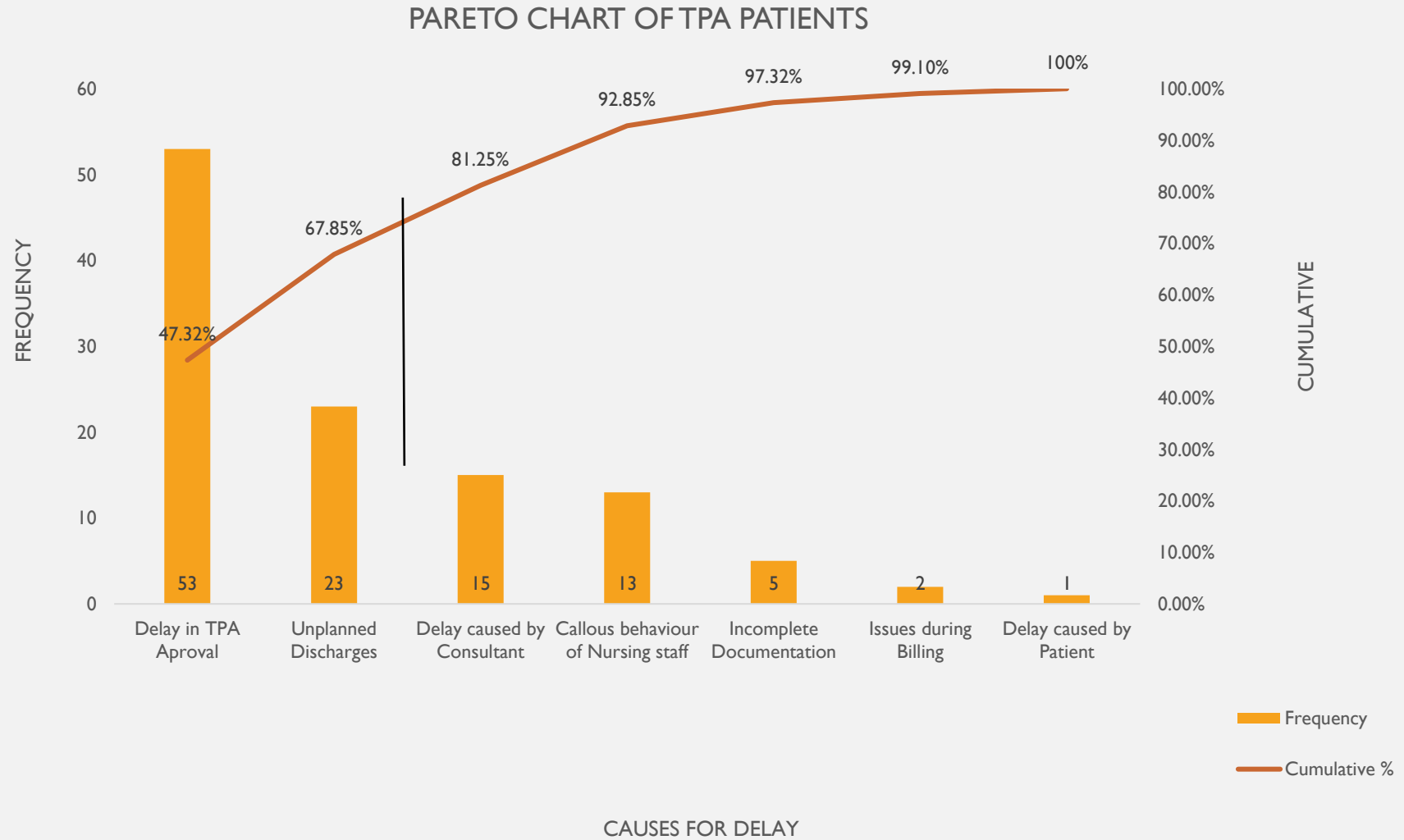
- The secondary data was collected using the Hospital Information System where all the patients were tracked for delays in discharge, if any.
- The next step was collecting the primary data by conducting an unstructured interview of the patients and the hospital staff to know the reasons behind the delay.
- Average TAT for cash patients (calculated) = 138 minutes
- Average TAT for TPA patients (calculated) = 312 minutes
- The data analysis is performed through the Pareto chart which were made using MS Excel.
- Pareto analysis was carried out to find out the significant causes of delay in the discharge process of each cash, TPA and panel patients.

RESULTS

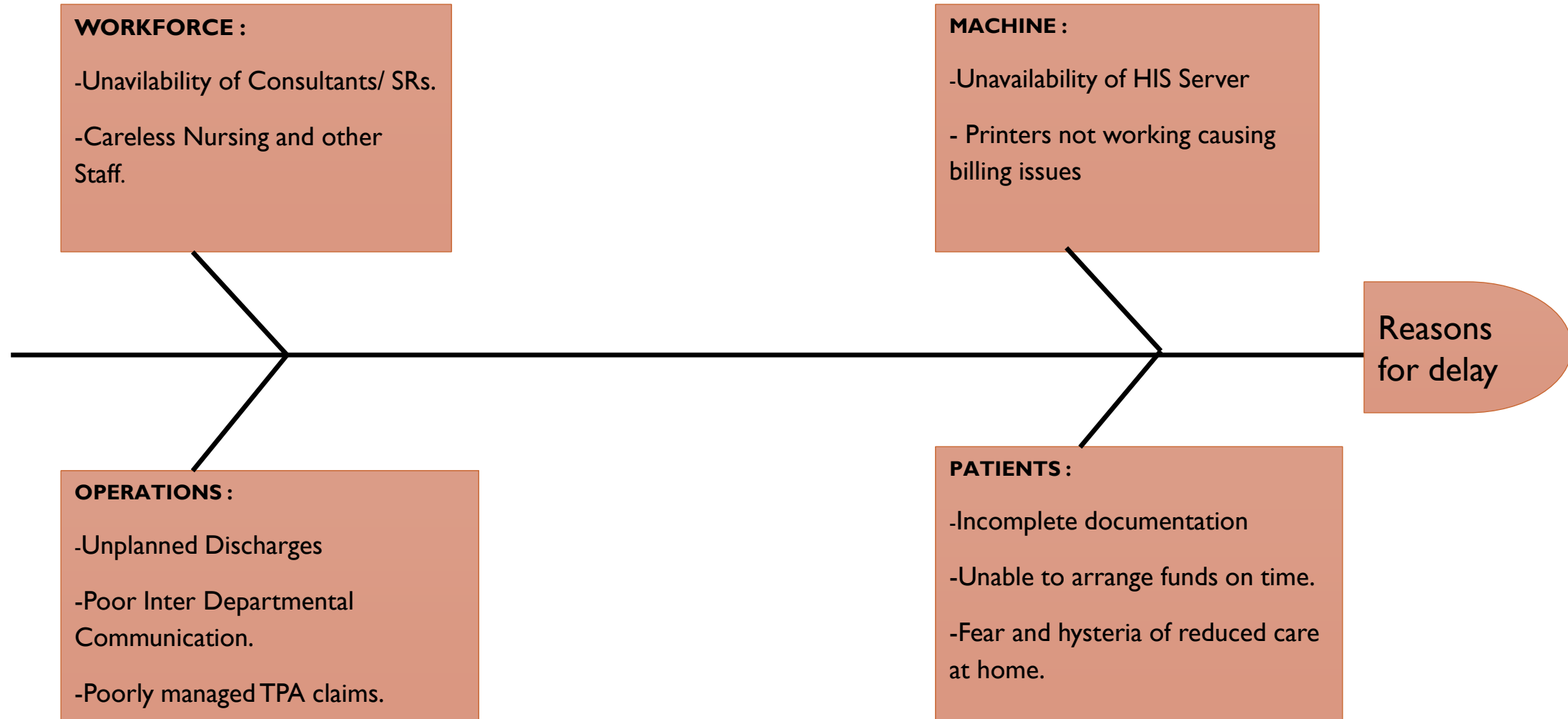
- **Pareto Chart of Cash Patients:**



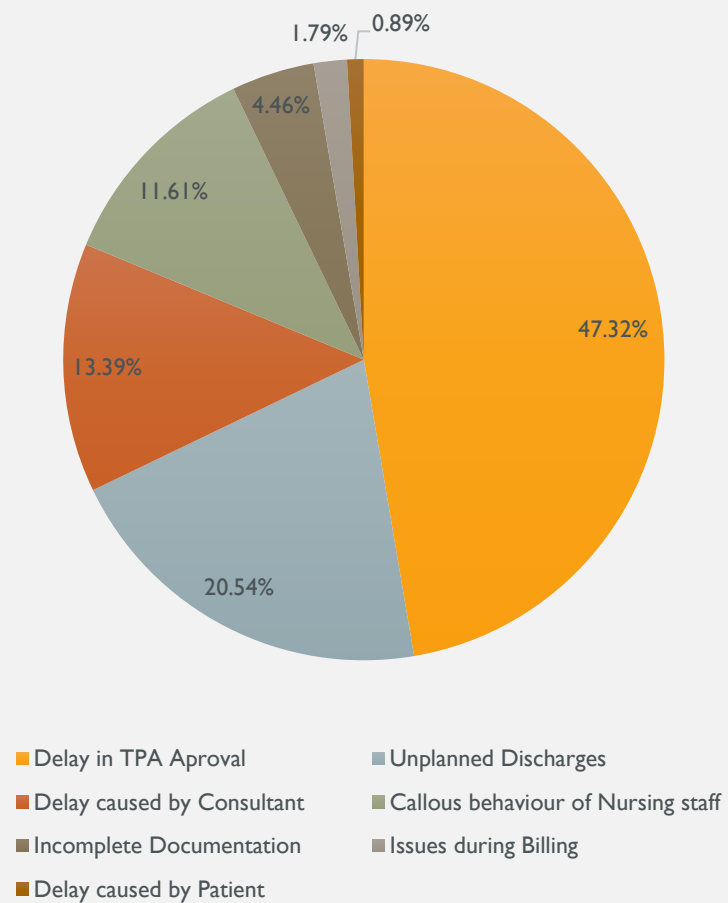
- **Pareto chart of TPA Patients**



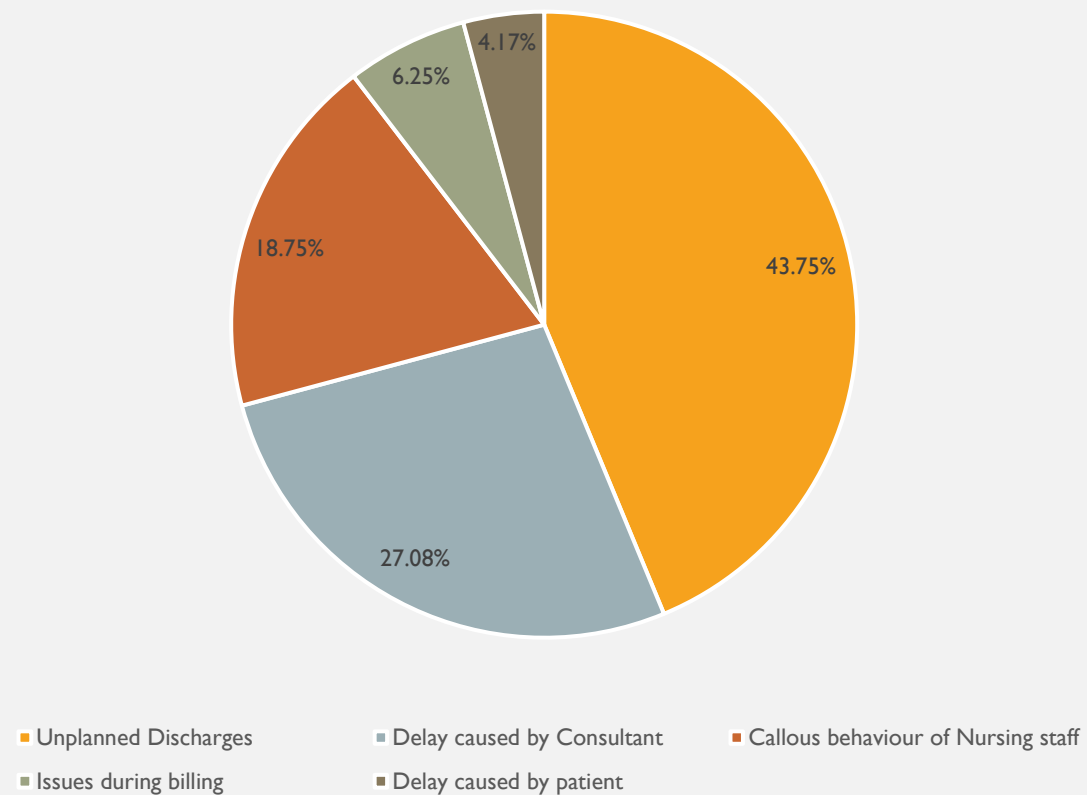
FISH BONE DIAGRAM



% of different delays in TPA Patients



% of different delays in Cash Patients



DISCUSSION

- The entire research done above talks about the discharge of a patient from the hospital. The discharge process is long one with various steps involved and each step has to be fully proof read in terms of operational efficiency.
- Almost all the hospitals face a problem with their discharges and people everywhere are working to make the whole process free of any loopholes.
- Here a study was conducted in Max Hospital, Shalimar, Delhi where a sample of 120 patients (60 cash and 60 TPA) were taken as the sample population. The discharge process of each and every one of them was monitored carefully using the HIS

- The major reasons for the delay in case of cash patients were seen to the unplanned discharges which constituted 43.75% of the entire lot and the minimum percentage was seen to be caused by the patients amounting to around 0.8% of the total discharges.
- Lack of man power when needed and also lack in motivation to work in the hospital staff mainly the nursing staff were also seen to be contributing in delays.
- Similarly, reasons were also given for the TPA patients which includes delay caused by the approval of claims by the insurance companies amounting to 47.3% of the total figure.
- Various recommendations have also been given for the same which could be adopted and this would help the hospital staff to combat the problems and come up with a smooth and fast process flow.

CONCLUSION

- Patient discharge is a complex process involving cooperation and coordination of all departments and staff in the hospital.
- In this study, time taken for discharge process in Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh in Delhi was analyzed. In conclusion it can be said that discharge process forms an integral part of any operational aspect of the hospital since it determines the level of patient satisfaction as well as streamlines various other aspects of the working of the hospital as well thereby reducing costs incurred.
- Various reasons were found out and analyzed using different tools to and root cause analysis was performed in order to study the reasons in detail.
- The increased TAT is a very harmful factor for any hospital because it majorly tampers with the patient satisfaction and the quality of care that the hospital can give . also if the number of steps are more and the time taken for each step is also high it also leads to unwanted higher expenditures for the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) As seen from the data above the most common reason for delay are unplanned discharges. It can be understood that sometimes due to sudden improvement in health there has to be an unplanned discharge. This causes delay.

In order to combat this issue, a different set of SOPs should be laid down to guide the unplanned discharges which should have its own TAT. Also, a separate detailed report should be maintained for every unplanned discharge by the SR / consultant who is on the case stating each and every reason clearly for the sudden discharge with monthly audits.

- 2) Inter departmental communication should be made strong by enhancing the operational team of the organization.

- 3) Another major reason for delay is the time taken during nursing clearance. This is due to the discharge summary not being prepared on time which has to be done by the consultant/ SR.

Giving moral/ cash incentives to the doctors by announcing “doctor of the month” or any such initiative can help.

Formal training and refresher courses given to the doctors. Also, it should be made sure that the KPIs that are being used in the performance appraisal of the doctors must also include the discharges,

4) Callous behavior on part of the nursing staff is also seen to be causing delays. Nurses should be properly trained and should be given courses time to time along with proper incentives so that they are motivated to do their job whole heartedly.

5) Delay of TPA patients is that it takes time for the insurance company to approve the insurance claim as it is a long process. The recommendation that can be made in such a situation is to tell the insurance company to speed up the process and give them a timely reminders time and again.

6) Provide the patient with an estimate slightly closer to the actual bill at the time of financial counseling so that the patient/ attendant do the needful and no time is wasted as the patients are sometimes unable to arrange funds on time.

7) Time to time repair and maintenance checks should be done of all the software as well as the hardware in use so that there are no delays caused due to non-functionality of any system.

8) Patients should also be given proper counselling before they get admission unto the hospital and also at the time of their discharge so that they do not have any doubts while leaving the hospital.

9) Appropriate feedback should be taken from the patients about the discharge process. There should also be also a proper mechanism in place for analysis of those feedback forms and then a proper committee should be formulated to act on the grievances and lose points that are captured.

Thank You!