

Reprocessing of the Hospital Out Patient Department (OPD) of a Tertiary Care Hospital in Central India

By

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Introduction

- Hospitals have a crucial task as they deal with human lives, which are often at risk.
- Effective and productive hospital services are desired by all.
- People usually get anxious or uncomfortable visiting the hospital OPD for various reasons. Discomfort or uneasiness due to the illness, hospital ambience, financial considerations or expenditure for treatment, fear of doctors or medical treatments are few of the various reasons which cause anxiety amongst the persons visiting the hospital.
- An easy and customer centric system makes the patient experience better helping them overcome their anxiety and reinforces their faith into receiving medical treatment and consultation.

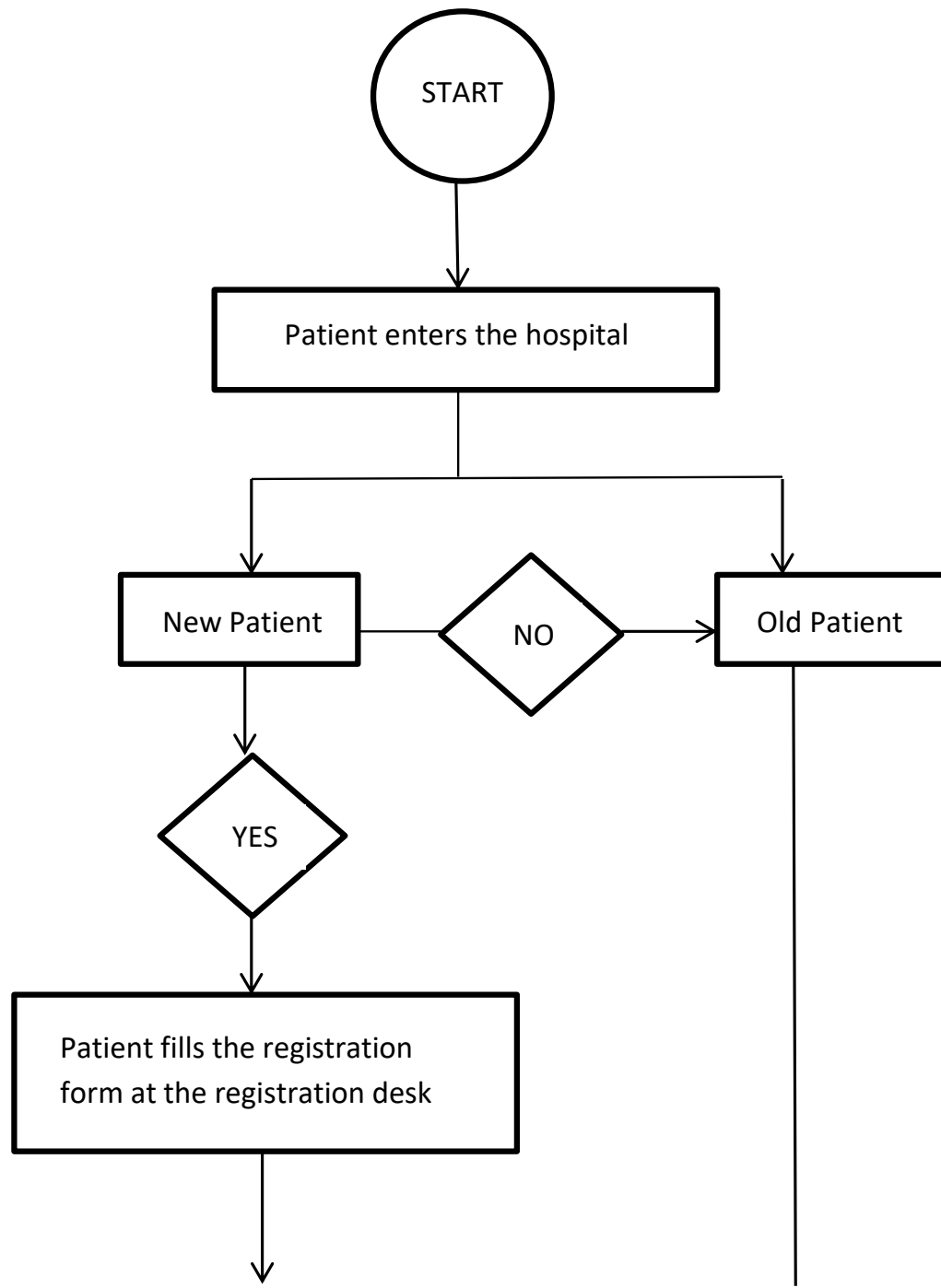
Problem

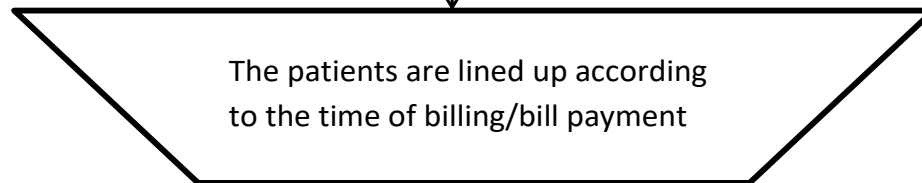
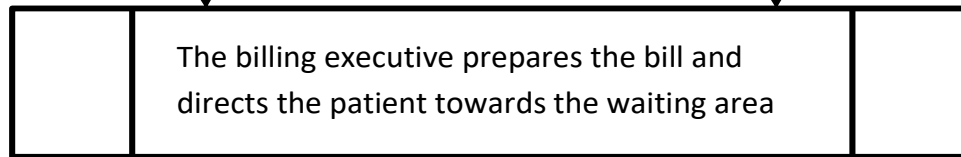
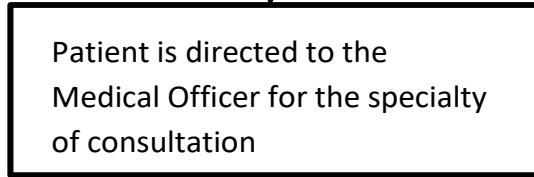
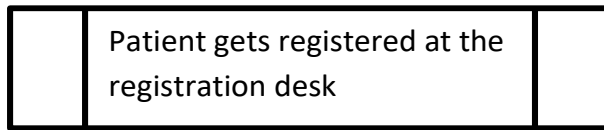
- The management of the hospital was concerned about the chaos and crowding of long queues and waiting times in the hospital's out-patient department.
- Delayed healthcare service delivery is a major in healthcare centers and is caused due to poor design of queuing system or its mismanagement.

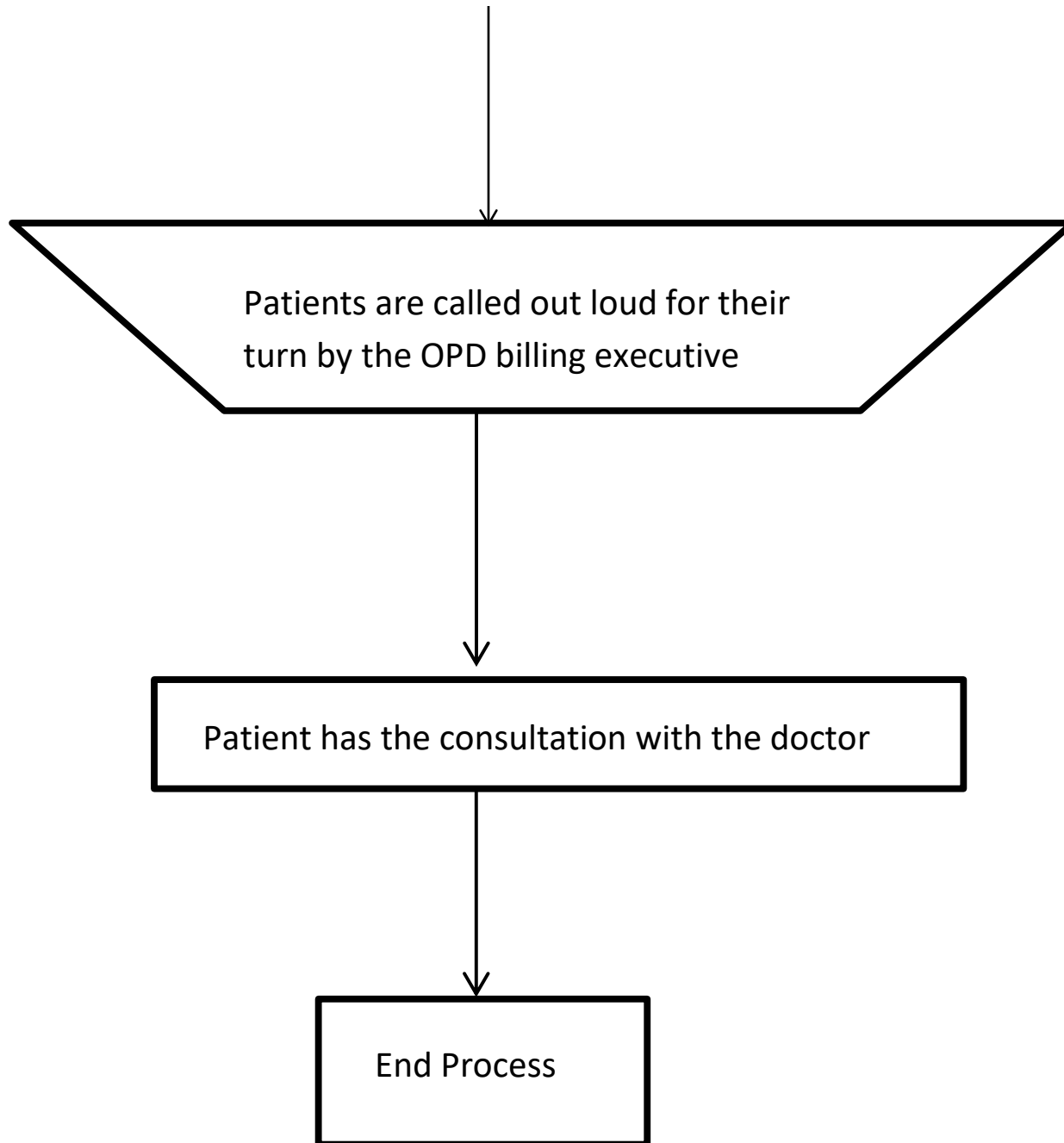
Hospital Overview: Key facts

- Located at a major city in Central India
- It is a 118 bedded hospital with diverse scope of services
- TPA Empanelment
- Caters to both domestic and out-stationed patients

Process Flow of the Out Patient Department







Methodology

Research questions:

- What is the current workflow/process of the hospital Out Patient Department?
- What are the problems/difficulties faced by the patients in the current process of the OPD?
- How can we streamline the current process of the OPD?
- How does improving the process affect the overall treatment outcome and care of the patient?

Objectives:

- To understand and identify the problems/difficulties faced by the patients in the current process of the OPD
- To establish recommendations to improve the current workflow/process of the hospital OPD

- Study design:

It is an observational, descriptive cross-sectional study design. The research approach is mixed i.e. both qualitative and quantitative. Data collection was done using questionnaire.

- Study setting:

The study setting is in a private tertiary care hospital located in central India.

The hospital, due to its strategic location receives patients not only from the city but surrounding areas and neighboring states.

- Study population:

The patients and their attendants or relatives visiting the Out Patient Department of the hospital were considered for the study. The patient care or OPD staff was also a part of this study.

- Inclusion Criteria:

Members of the Patient care team and OPD executives

Patients and attendants visiting the Out Patient Department of the hospital

Co-operative participants willing to provide answers related to the study

- Exclusion Criteria:

Uncooperative members of the Patient care team or uncooperative OPD executives

Uncooperative patients and attendants visiting the hospital Outpatient department

Study procedure:

- Sample size:

Two sets of population was taken into consideration:

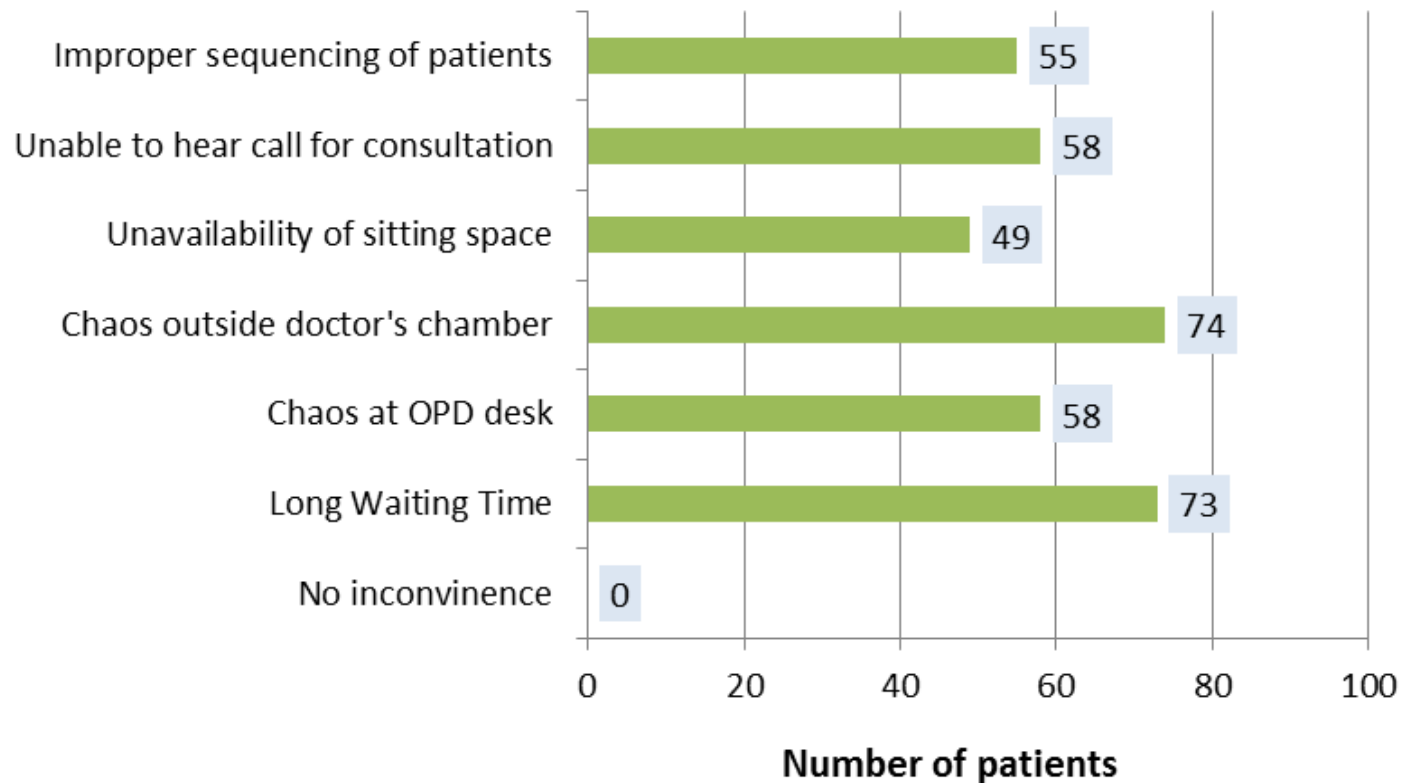
1. A sample of 100 patients/attendants visiting the hospital OPD was considered for the study.
2. A sample of 12 OPD executive staff working at the Hospital OPD was considered for the study.

- Sampling technique: The sampling technique used was non-probability convenience sampling.
- Research tool: Self designed questionnaires

Results

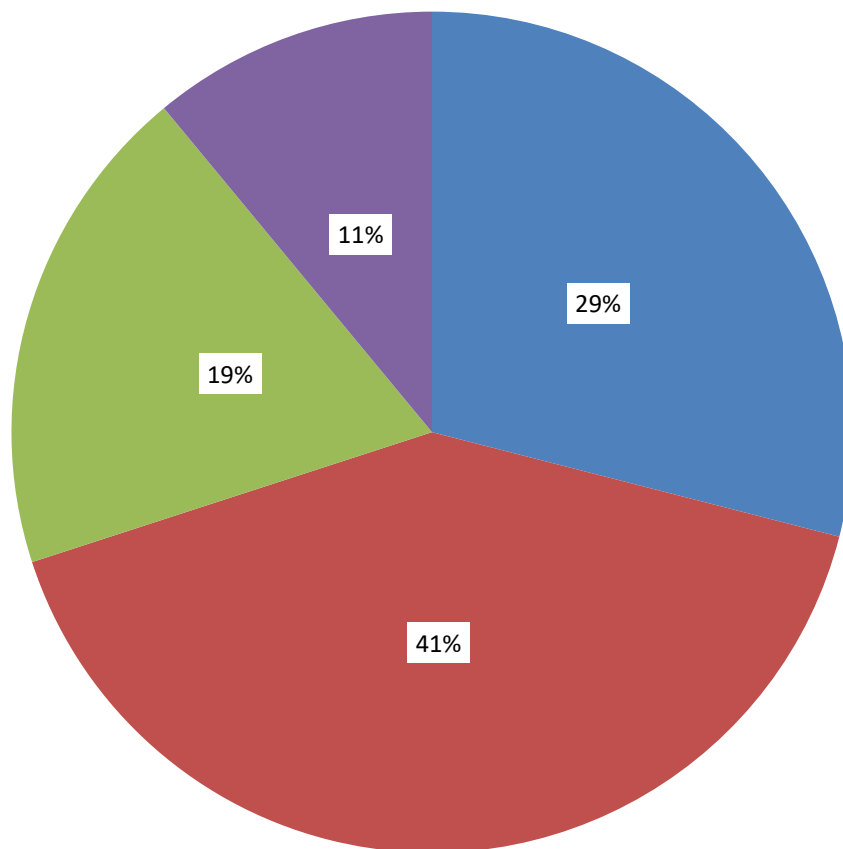
(Patients and attendants)

Inconveniences faced by the patient while waiting in the OPD

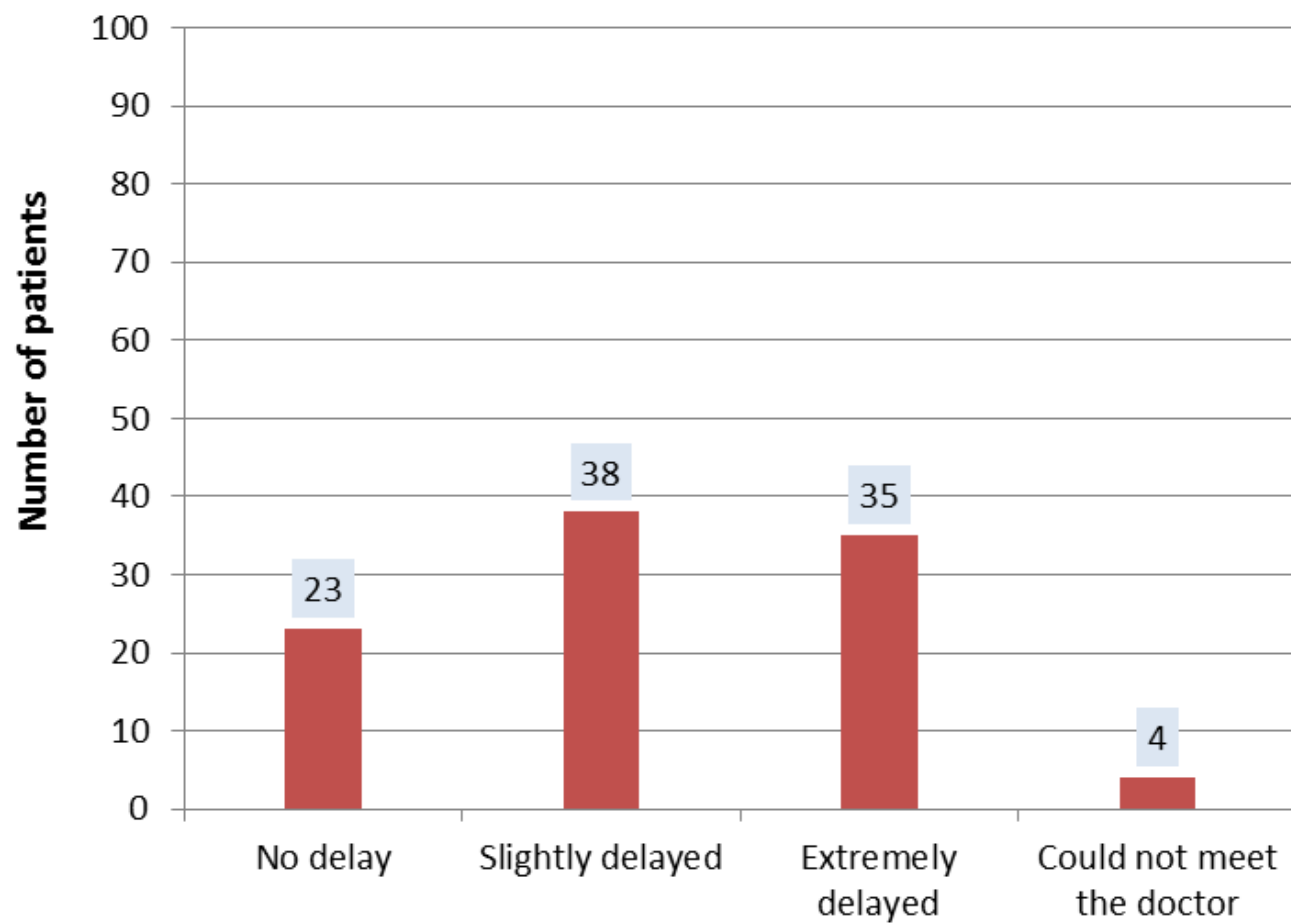


Enquiry by patients for their turn at the OPD

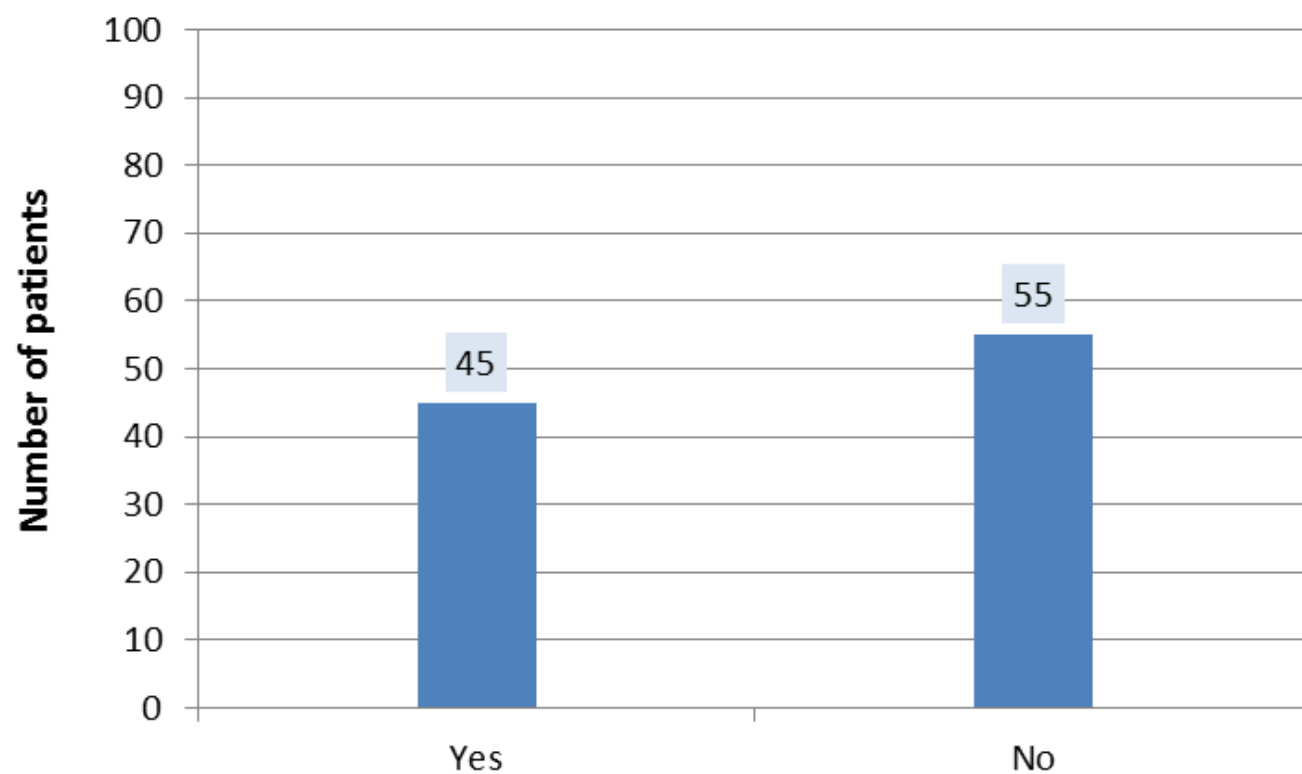
■ Nil ■ 1-2 times ■ 3-5 times ■ >5 times



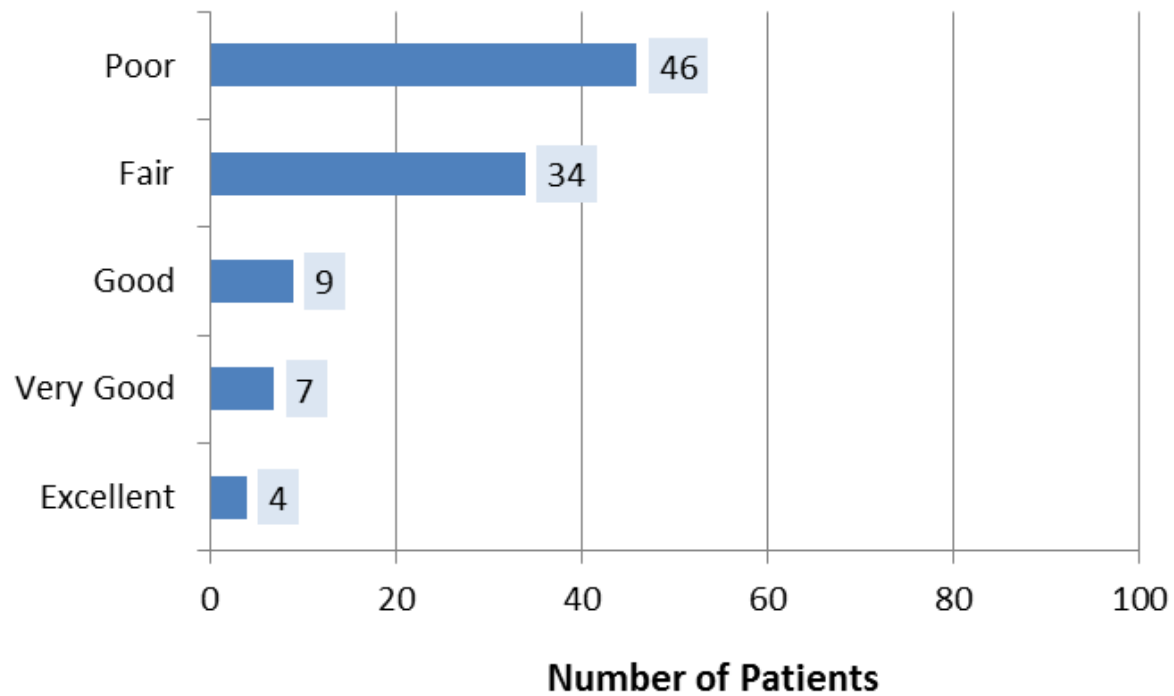
Delay in consultation after the billing process



Patients' satisfaction towards current system of OPD



Patients' experience from billing to consultation in the OPD



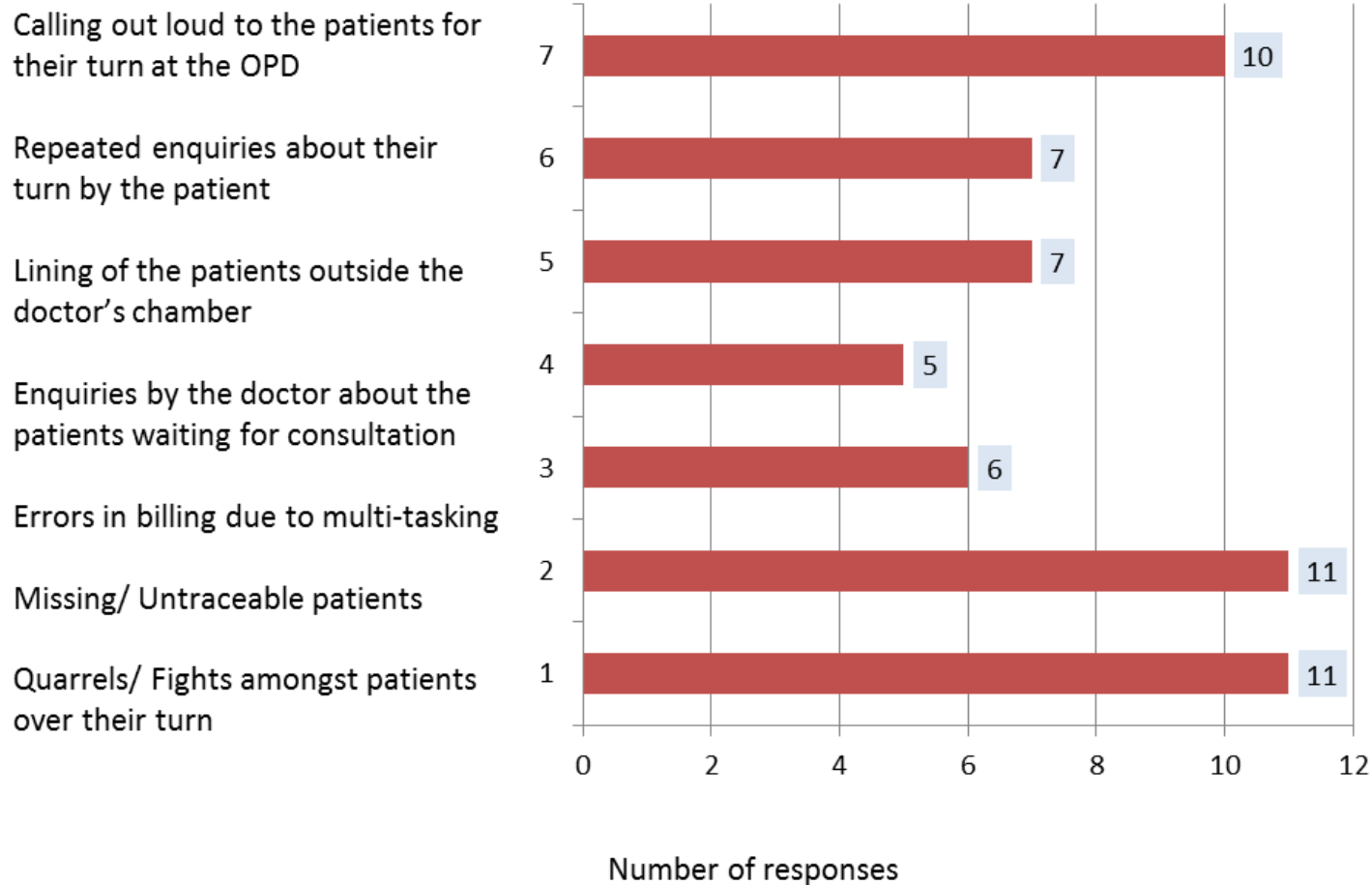
Results

(OPD and Executive Staff)

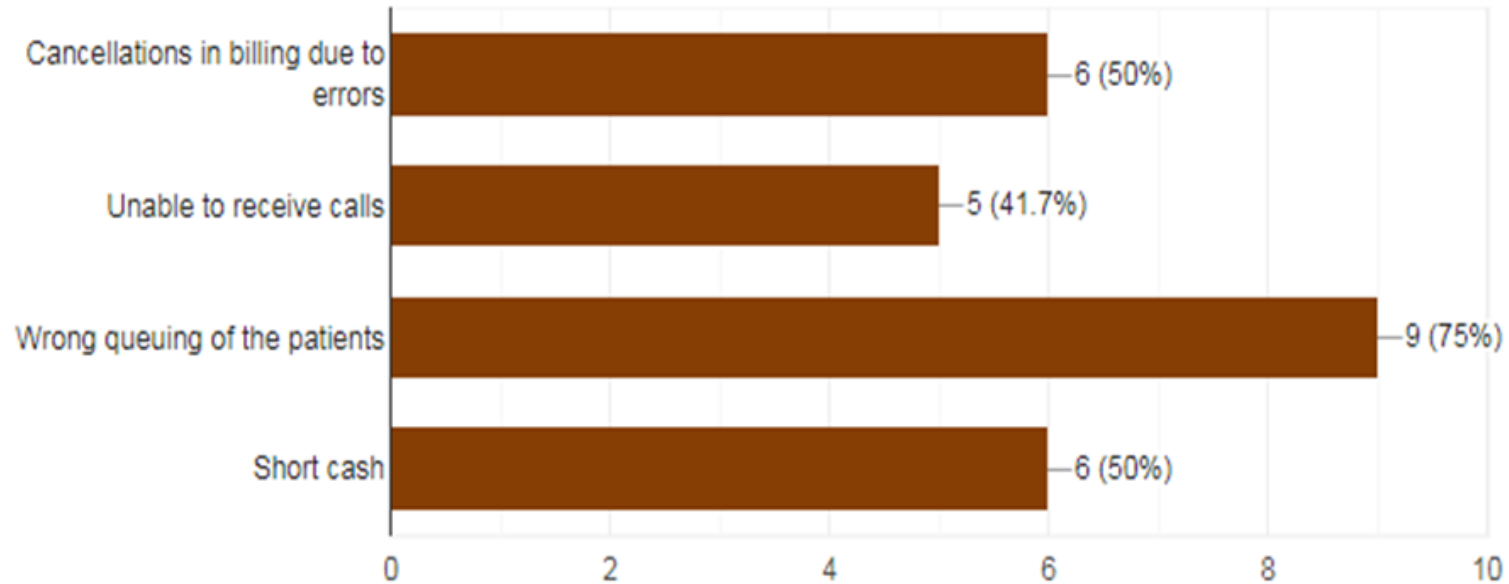
Most Significant reason for crowding at the OPD desk



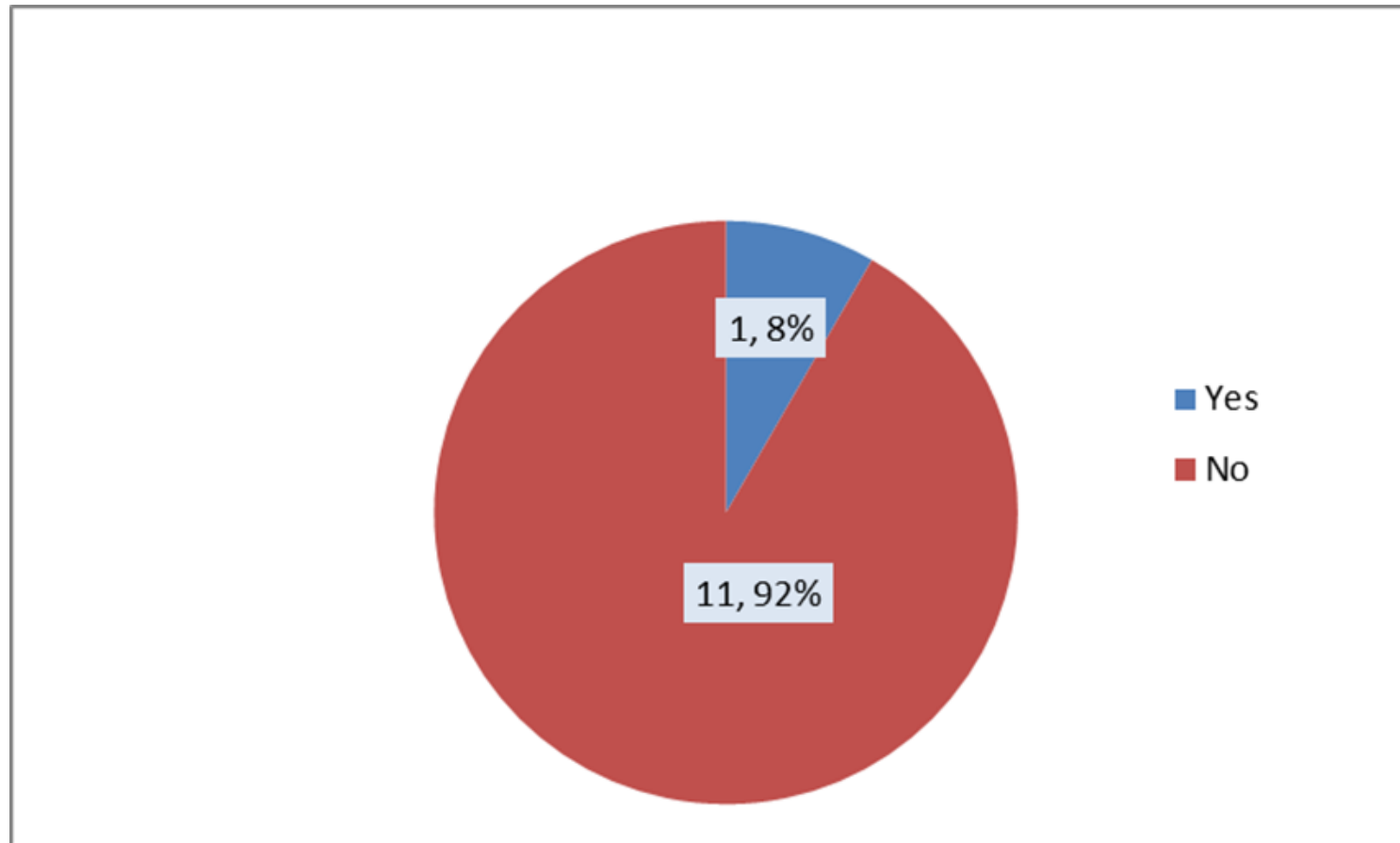
Challenges faced by the OPD executive at the OPD billing desk



Attributable factors for errors occurring at work



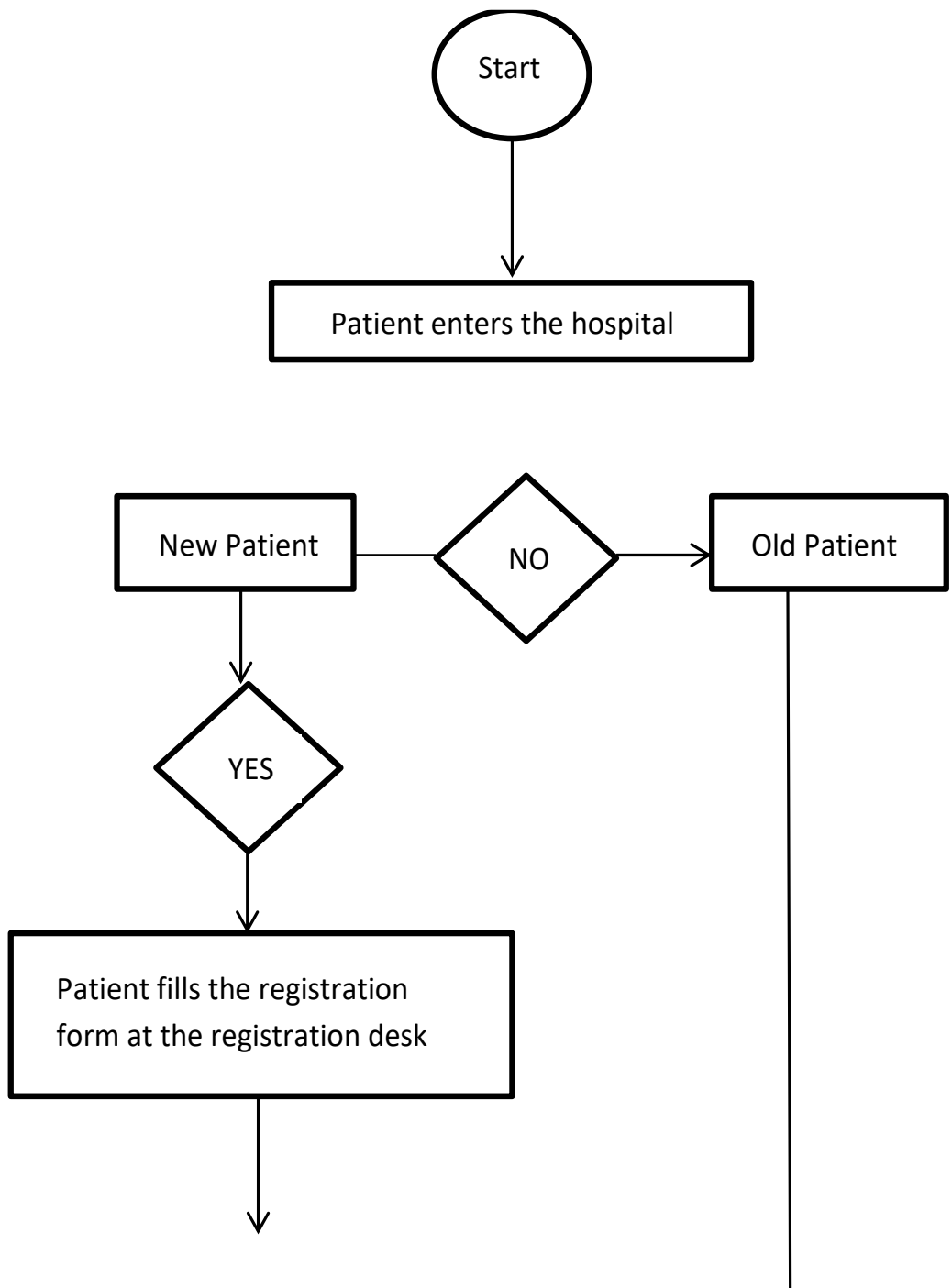
Satisfaction towards current queuing system



Recommendations

After analysis and interpretation of data, the following recommendations were established:

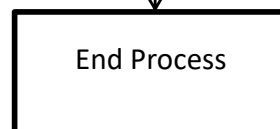
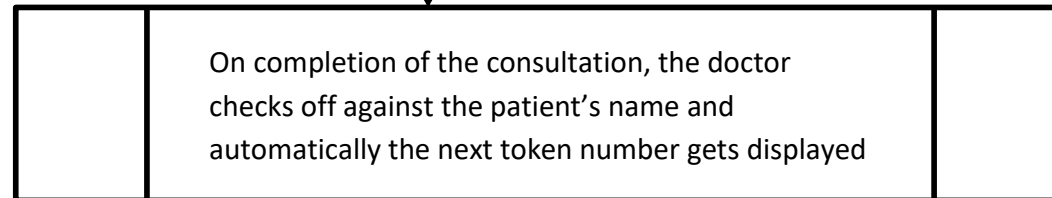
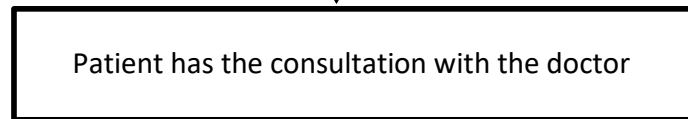
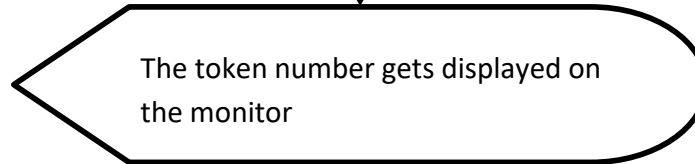
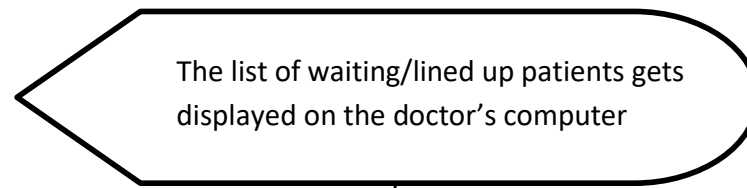
1. Scheduling of appointments must be done as there is unnecessary crowding at the OPD. A lot of outstation patients too are visiting the OPD and appointment scheduling would ease the process.
2. A new queuing system/ queue management system should be implemented in the hospital with integration of Hospital Information System (HIS).
3. A proposed queue management system based on the first in first out principle was prepared and shared with the authorities. The new process flow of the OPD will be as follows:



Patient is directed to the
Medical Officer for the specialty
of consultation

The billing executive prepares the bill and
generates a token number

A sticker with the token number is
printed and pasted on the file



Conclusion

- Healthcare, like no other industry, could stand to benefit from top-notch customer experience. Making your patients feel safe and happy should be a priority in all healthcare set ups.
- A queue management system helps to automate the process of handling walk-ins. It helps in regulating the entire flow in the OPD, thus making the entire process smooth, non-chaotic and easy for both the service providers (doctors, nurses including the executive staff) and the service users i.e. patients.

Thank you!