ENGAGING PATIENT IN MANAGING THEIR CLINIC APPPOINTMENT VIA A MOBILE APPLICATION

Teh Lin Xiang, Amirul Adib Sham, Phang Moon Leng
Medical Affairs & Quality, Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre

Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre

ABSTRACT

Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre has adopted the use of a convenient mobile appointment application which empowers patient to make decisions related to their outpatient clinic appointment. The app is used by both the patients and clinic staff in scheduling appointments. The hospital aims to study the extent of app usage among the hospital patients via data generated by the software. It was found that while usage is still low compared to the conventional method, an increasing trend of usage was observed. The hospital aspires to explore methods to further increase and improve the use of this app among patients.

CONTACT

Teh Lin Xiang
Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre
lxteh@orientalmedical.com.my
www.orientalmedical.com.my

INTRODUCTION

Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre has been a fully integrated electronic medical records hospital since its inauguration in 2015. The hospital has explored ways on how to improve patient experience with the use of healthcare technology. Among the options explored and implemented includes the use of a healthcare appointment app for clinic appointments. In the advent of healthcare digital and worldwide shortage of healthcare staff, this app has proven its worth. The hospital aims to study the usage of the app among hospital patients in making appointments and managing their appointments. An automated customized message is also sent to the patient a day prior to remind them of their appointment.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The convention method of scheduling an elective clinic appointments require patients to communicate with the clinic doctor or representative either in person or via a phone call. With the introduction of this digital app, patients are required to down this app via into their mobile phones and with the click of a button, patients can browse, select and make a clinic appointment with any existing consultants of the hospital and select their preferred appointment date and time. The app also features the doctor's working hours, clinic number, their specialty and credentials to aid patients in making decision on their preferred choice of consultants. The app allows patient full view of all available appointment sessions. Banners and social media infographics were made prominently available to encourage the use of the mobile app.

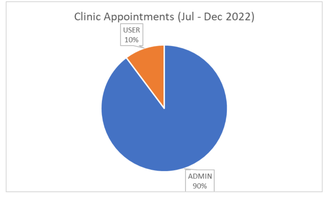
RESULTS

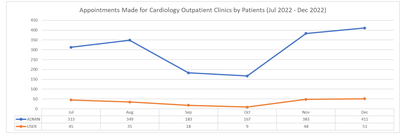
A retrospective study was performed on clinic appointments made to two outpatient cardiologist clinics in a private hospital across six months between 1st July 2022 to 31st December 2022.

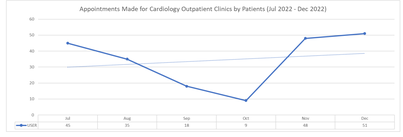
Out of 2,012 appointments made during the study period, 206 or 10.2% were made by the patient while 1806 or 89.8% were made by the clinic assistants. 65.1% has been successfully completed whereas 34.0% were rescheduled or cancelled by the patient. An increasing trend is observed. 105 or 51.0% of patients with appointment arrive within 1 hour of their selected appointment time.

25 or 12.1% are made by patients at the age range of 18-30 years old, 70 or 34.0% are made by 30-45 year old patients; 75 or 36.4% are made by 45-60 year old. 99 or 48.1% of the clinic visits are completed within 2 hours of the visit.

GRAPHS AND TABLES







DISCUSSION

While the use of the appointment app remains low, an increasing trend is observed charting at 13.3% higher in December compared to July 2023. Patients who had made an appointment are more likely to arrive close to their appointment hours and waited less. The mobile application is used mainly by patients within the age range of 18-45 which forms the demographic of patients perusing the clinic services at OMSMC. The app usage declined during the month of September and October which is consistent with the decline in number of patients during those months. The mobile app however has limitation as it requires a staff to update the information when the patient has arrived or went for consultation.

CONCLUSIONS

While the mobile application is convenient, many patients still prefer to make appointments via the conventional method. The study may be expanded to other consultant clinics and other allied health areas utilized by patients such as Health Screening Unit and Rehab Department to optimize patient waiting time. More studies and action can be taken to increase patient awareness on the availability of the mobile app.

REFERENCES

1) Wali M. Hussein, Payam and Salim, Mohammad and Ahmed, Bilal (2019) *A Prototype Mobile Application for Clinic Appointment Reminder and Scheduling System in Erbil City*. International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology, 28 (1). pp. 17-24. ISSN 20054238
2) Greenstein J, Topp R, Etnoyer-Slaski J, Staelgraeve M, McNulty J *Effect of a Mobile Health App on Adherence to Physical Health Treatment: Retrospective Analysis* JMIR Rehabil Assist Technol 2021;8(4):e31213