

Patients waiting time in fracture clinic

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Introduction:

- The patient's charter, department of health states that "patients will be given a specific appointment time and be seen within 30 minutes of that time" (1)
- Patient waiting time in outpatient clinics is often the major reason for patients' complaints (2)
- There is rapid decline in patient tolerance when they wait for over 30 minutes (3)
- Patient wait-time is an important indicator of patient satisfaction. (4)
- Time allocated to see a patient in GP practice is 8-10 min, however there is no literature suggesting average time taken by clinician to see a patient in fracture clinic.
- In our DGH there is a consultant led fracture clinic run by one consultant and 2 registrars. The usual duration of clinic is 210 minutes. There is no specialist nurse practitioner.

Objective :

- Primary
Waiting time for patients
- Secondary
Patient load on clinic i.e. patient to clinician ratio

Material and Method:

- Retrospective
- All patients booked in fracture clinic for 2 weeks from 14/10/2013 to 25/10/2013
- Data collected from attendance sheet in fracture clinic
- Data analysis using Excel 2010

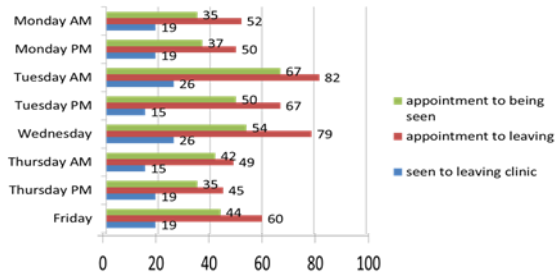
Key Data collected:

- Total time spent in clinic
- Time spent for patient to see a clinician
- Time spent once patient has been seen by the clinician i.e. treatment time
- Number of patients booked at the same time
- Patients to doctors ratio in clinics

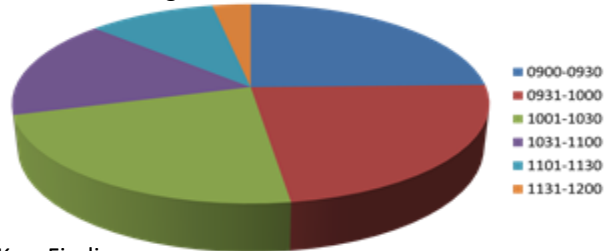
Total number of patients included in this study:

914

Results:



Patients Booking Time:



Key Findings:

- Persistently delayed running clinics
- Stressful both for patients and staff-Increased risk of committing mistakes
- Bottle neck is from appointment to clinician seeing the patient; Not much time spent once patient has been seen by clinician i.e. prompt plaster room and dressing service
- Nearly 50% patients booked in first hour of clinic

Suggestions:

- Fixed number of patients to be booked for fracture clinic
- Patient doctor ratio in clinic to be changed from 25 patients to a doctor to 20 patients to a doctor
- Overbooking should be rarity rather than a norm- it should be authorised by consultant or on call registrar
- Staggered booking time

Reference:

- (1) Department of Health. The Patient's Charter. London:HMSO,1991
- (2) Patient attitude towards waiting in an outpatient clinic and its applications. X M Huang Cardiff Business School, UWCC. Health Services Management Research 03/1994; 7(1):2-8. DOI:10.1177/095148489400700101
- (3) Outpatients and their Doctors: a Study of Patients, Potential Patients, General Practitioners and Hospital Doctors, 1989; Cartwright,A. and Windsor,J; London:HMSO,1992
- (4) K. C. Chung, J. B. Hamil, H. M. Kim, M. R. Walters and E. G. Wilkins, "Predictors of Patient Satisfaction in an Outpatient Plastic Surgery Clinic," Angery, Vol. 42, No. 1, 1999, pp. 56-60. Annals of Plastic Surg. doi:10.1097/0000637-19990100000010

