



CASE STUDY: ACUTE HOSPITAL OUTPATIENTS CAPACITY & DEMAND MANAGEMENT



BACKGROUND

The Outpatient Departments in this Foundation Trust Hospital used rigid Clinic Timetables with New & Return Patient Appointment Slots set in line with local interpretations of Royal College guidelines. No account was taken of Demand Fluctuations nor of Individual Consultant's clinical practices (i.e. Dr X's Clinic Template was set at 4 New and 12 Return patients, Ratio 1:4 ; when analysis of Dr X's clinic history showed a Ratio 1:2.6)

STUDY FINDINGS

Following a three week study, working with the local management team Meridian identified a number of areas which if addressed would substantially improve Capacity & Resource Requirement Planning & Scheduling.

In principle, historic demand was analysed and forecasting tools developed which allowed the number of Clinics & Appointment Mix to be varied in line with forecast demand.

The forecasting tools were developed to allow "what if" modelling of waiting list reductions required to meet National Treatment Path Targets.

Bottlenecks were identified in the patient journey. Two - week wait to first appointments were hindered by the slow turnaround of grading of referrals by Consultants.

The Service Agreement with the PCT specified that Basic Diagnostics should be complete before first appointment, to aid speedy diagnosis and start of treatment. Compliance with this requirement was very poor, resulting in an increased requirement for return appointments and delay the start of treatment.

The paper-flow was not well controlled, notes were not tracked and retrieval was difficult as the last user was generally unknown.

OBJECTIVE

1. Develop detailed Capacity & Resource Requirement Plans taking into account demand variations.
2. Develop the means to vary the Clinic Timetables & Templates to reflect the demand forecast and the real New / Return appointments required. The organisational structure in Medical Records, who managed the PAS System had to be re-aligned to support this change.
3. Develop tools to allow rapid modelling of the various scenarios which were proposed for wait list reduction (Every Specialty had 3 or 4 suggested alternatives)
4. Develop a Management Information System which allowed management to track the results. The installed System focussed on Visual Outputs to support existing or developed Numerical Reports.

ACUTE TRUST OUTPATIENTS CAPACITY & DEMAND

5. To use the PAS and Theatre systems in concert to enable consultants at the outpatient consultation stage to book patients into theatre slots

RESULTS

The Demand Driven Capacity Plans and analysis of Historic Clinical Practices were used initially to get buy in to the principles of varying capacity to face up to fluctuating demand.

The management of Wait Lists and the reduction of Wait Times, using evidence based tools, has moved all Specialities towards their Targets and all met their targets by the end of the year

The increased throughput of patients, with a proportionally higher number of new patients vs. return patients has generated a significant increase in Revenue.
Referral grading is now complete within 48 hours of receipt.

Notes are now tracked and the paper-flow is much improved.

Availability of notes is measured as 99%+ vs. a baseline of 85%.

Availability of Diagnostics at First Appointment is increasing (actual measurement not available)

The PAS system and theatre system were linked enabling the patient details to be transferred into the theatre system without re-work

Patients were able to be booked directly into pre-assessment from their outpatient consultation

Real time availability of capacity information enabled the Trust to use the Choose & Book system to broadcast spare capacity and attract out of area patients to increase revenue.

**A Productive NHS means
the *right* resources, in
the *right* place,
at the *right* time,
providing services at the *right*
quantity, quality and cost.**



Address: Meridian Productivity Ltd,
36 Atholl Crescent Lane, Edinburgh,
Midlothian, EH3 8ET.

E mail: info@meridianpl.co.uk
Telephone: 0131 625 8500
Fax: 0131 625 8505

