

Dental care management in Albaha: Waiting list for example

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Abstract

The management of waiting lists has proven to be a major challenge for Albaha dental center, particularly in the prosthodontics department. This has resulted in longer wait times and lower patient satisfaction. To navigate and overcome these obstacles, a careful operational business plan is suggested, considering the ripple effects on the well-being of patients and operational effectiveness. Future planning, service provider levels and waiting list management are some of the proposed detailed plans to help solve the problem. In particular, to improve waiting list accuracy and engagement, it is recommended to implement an automated validation system and open patient communication. A triage system and instructional initiatives are intended to improve dental practitioners' skills and expedite patient care at the service provider level. Moreover, future planning considers research sponsorship, specialty clinics and infrastructure expansion to ensure continued growth and better services. The approach, based on a feasible implementation plan within short, mid and long-term goals, also specifies resource allocation, roles and comprehension of probable obstacles along with strategic mitigation plans. Key performance metrics measure the satisfaction of patients, wait time reduction and operational efficiency with an emphasis on the human touch. Staff training, budget optimization and improved communication channels are strategies used to address issues, including employee resistance, budgetary limitations and communication barriers.

Keywords: Waiting lists, Prostodontics, Dental care, Patient satisfaction.

Introduction

The delivery of dental treatments is constantly changing and dental centres, as pillars of community health, are essential to maintaining the general public's oral health. For an extended period, Albaha Dental Center (ADC) has been committed to providing quality dental care to the community population. Nonetheless, in recent weeks, the clinic has faced a wide range of challenges, which has led to the continually growing waiting list within the prosthodontics department. For this reason, there is a need for immediate and strategic attention to help address the issue of a growing waiting list. Integrally, the prosthodontics department at Albaha dental centre have experienced a challenge in managing the waiting list, a problem for the entire clinic due to its negative impact on healthcare experts and patients. The growing waiting list has increased

waiting time for patients needing urgent medical care. Initially, the waiting list was developed to ensure organized patient management; however, the growing list has made it difficult for the facility to maintain optimal service standards. The problems with the waiting list have become intertwined, delaying patients' access to necessary dental care. This condition makes it more challenging to provide timely care and negatively impacts patients' general satisfaction despite the highest priority on their dental health.

Impact analysis

ADC's goal is their dedication to providing outstanding patient care. However, the problem of long wait times has come to light as a significant impediment to the timely provision of essential dental care. Treatment delays are more than just a

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scheduling problem for patients needing prosthodontics care since they stop their path to the best possible dental health and general well-being. Besides, it is impossible to overstate how these delays affect patient care. Long wait times may cause patients to experience psychological suffering in addition to the physical effects of untreated dental problems, such as uncertainty and on-going discomfort. The long wait periods risk undermining patients' trust and confidence in ADC, a vital component of the patient-provider relationship.

Subsequently, the growing waiting lists have an equal impact on ADC's operational efficiency. The dental team, known for their commitment and skill, is working under more and more strain. Not only is it logistically challenging to manage such a large number of patients, but it also puts a strain on the dentists who are the foundation of ADC. This pressure raises more than simply concerns for the well-being of the employees. Moreover, it also increases the possibility of burnout, which may significantly impact the standard of care professionals provide patients. These operational difficulties have a significant ripple effect. For instance, it affects every facet of ADC's service provision and goes beyond the clinic's regular operations. In jeopardy are the clinic's effectiveness, reputation and, above all, its capacity to provide community services. As a result, ADC must handle these difficulties as essential parts of their goal to preserve and improve community oral health, not only as practical difficulties.

Problem statement

As indicated earlier, the extended waiting list has increased the waiting time for patients to get treatments. Patients' satisfaction and experience with healthcare providers might be adversely affected by prolonged wait times in dental offices. In particular, when patients wait too long to get treatment, their level of satisfaction is reduced. Patients demonstrate the negative consequences of extended waiting times on several patient-provider relationship dimensions [1]. Patients are less likely to be satisfied with their appointments when waiting an extended period. Based on the research, patients who received care from doctors who arrived early expressed greater satisfaction than those who received care from clinicians who were on time or late. This discontent can be linked to the discomfort and frustration brought on by extended waiting, resulting in a less favourable assessment of the patient-provider relationship.

Additionally, people with more education seem to be more sensitive to extended wait times, showing the most vital unfavourable reactions [1]. This implies that people with greater education levels might have higher standards for the effectiveness and arrangement of healthcare services. Consequently, if these expectations are not fulfilled, it may have a more noticeable detrimental effect on their level of satisfaction and assessment of the patient-provider relationship.

Furthermore, extended wait times for patients at dentist offices damage more than just the patient-provider relationship; they also undermine patient confidence in the health care system. Prolonged wait times might cause patients to lose trust and start doubting the effectiveness of the healthcare system. There

is a noticeable effect on dental health and the psychological impact on patients. Delayed interventions can worsen dental diseases and make problems more serious that could have been treated earlier. Subsequently, the negative impact does not only affect the patients. Dental personnel also experience elevated stress levels while handling dissatisfied patients, as they already operate in a high-stress setting. The team may unintentionally compromise the quality of treatment as a result of this additional strain as they negotiate a stressful environment. Not only is it essential to streamline procedures, but waiting times must also be addressed to maintain patient trust, provide prompt dental care and provide a great work environment for the committed dental professionals who work hard to deliver the best treatment possible.

Literature Review

Research study

Waiting list management: Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive plan. The primary approach is waiting list management. One of the approaches for waiting list management is implementing a systematic approach to validate and update the waiting list regularly to ensure timely patient care and prevent worsening health inequalities. Validating the waiting list involves different ways. For instance, checking the patient's condition and additional risk factors can help validate the list [2]. This entails assessing the patient's health history, present condition and other pertinent data to establish the treatment's priority level.

Additionally, it is important to constantly communicate with the patients to help them understand their needs and preferences regarding treatment [2]. Besides, constant communication should be extended between the patients, their families and healthcare providers. Moreover, the patients should also be given priority to postpone surgeries while still on the waiting list, as this helps validate and update the waiting list. Different approaches can be used to address the issue of staffing and resources. For instance, volunteer integration and equipment maintenance help address challenges related to staffing and resources. In particular, collaboration with dental charities, senior dental students and part-time contracts to augment staffing is integral. Moreover, conducting regular checks and maintenance for all clinic equipment is integral to ensuring that limited resources are utilized efficiently. Operational changes through the introduction of night shift clinics to accommodate patients at more flexible hours, as well as implementing specialized clinics for initial screenings and reducing unnecessary referrals, are also vital in waiting list management. Subsequently, establishing a dedicated office to analyse referrals, identifying and rectifying errors promptly, streamlining lab services for the entire city, enhancing efficiency and reducing waiting times are system improvement approaches to address the challenge of waiting time.

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Service provider levels

At ADC, a strategic separation of dental service providers is part of an innovative approach to addressing waiting list concerns. The deployment of a three-tier triage system shows a dedication to maximizing patient care based on specialty and competence. The dentistry centre reduces the need for out-of-region referrals by optimizing local capabilities and streamlining recommendations. With the advent of workshops and courses designed specifically for general dentists, education takes centre stage and promotes on-going learning and skill development. The recruitment campaign, which focuses on specialized subjects like orthodontics and oral maxillofacial surgery, demonstrates ADC's commitment to putting together a diverse and highly skilled workforce. By recognizing the mutually advantageous connection between research and service quality, dental research becomes essential. In addition, the goal of becoming a centre for dental education on a national and worldwide scale demonstrates a forward-thinking outlook that goes beyond the present difficulties and establishes ADC as a leader in dental care quality and innovation.

Future planning

Strategic planning underpins ADC patient care's vision of a future full of innovation and improved patient experiences. Infrastructure development aims to create an environment that supports the best possible patient care, not just to build a new dental facility. Ensuring timely completion demonstrates a strong commitment to efficiency and resource utilization. Seeking funding for dental research is a progressive move that recognizes research's critical role in improving dental care. ADC regularly participates in projects that advance the industry in an effort to advance its progression further. Creating specialty clinics for staff members and international visitors is a sign of their patient-centric philosophy, which takes a customized approach to address a range of demands. This strategy for the future is evidence of ADC's steadfast dedication to proactively sculpting a future in which dental care is associated with quality and innovation, in addition to addressing present issues.

Solution

While there are many alternatives that ADC can implement to address the issues of waiting time, it is important to be strategic and focus on ideas that can help the organization attain the intended goals and objectives. Fundamentally, the proposed solution is designed to address the waiting list issues comprehensively. Firstly, the use of the 5S technique presents a viable way for ADC patient care to handle its waiting list issues. Imagine the waiting area as a well-arranged area free from pointless mess and confusion, followed by the methodical procedures of sort, set in order, shine, standardize and sustain. Streamlining the patient journey begins with identifying and eliminating elements that are no longer needed [3]. Following the decluttering process, the next stages guarantee a tidy, orderly space where possible problems are identified early on.

The key to the 5S methodology's excellence is its ability to maintain and incorporate these gains into everyday operations. By doing this, ADC patient care promotes a culture of continuous improvement in addition to resolving waiting list issues. The waiting area is transformed into a comfortable and welcoming area where patients receive prompt, effective care, which benefits the healthcare personnel as well as the patients.

Waiting list management

Inherently, ADC's waiting list management problem can be solved through two well-considered strategies that put accuracy and patient communication first. First of all, the implementation of an automated validation system is a revolutionary approach. This intelligent solution guarantees that waiting lists are accurately and consistently checked by relieving the burden of human procedures. The technology uses sophisticated algorithms to keep an updated list, quickly deleting patients no longer in need of care and easily accepting new cases. This reduces needless delays and boosts operational efficiency by streamlining the waiting list and optimizing patient flow. Furthermore, ADC understands the value of open and honest patient communication. When a communication strategy is implemented, patients are kept updated about their status on the waiting list and expected wait periods. This strategy encourages transparency, establishes confidence and increases patient satisfaction *via* individualized emails, kind texts or an easily available patient site. By updating their status, patients are encouraged to actively participate in the process, which helps maintain the accuracy and efficiency of the waiting list. By integrating these approaches, ADC hopes to establish a waiting list management system that puts the needs and happiness of its valued patients first and is more human-centric.

Service provider levels

Subsequently, triage implementation and education programs are two novel strategies that have been introduced at the service provider levels to offer practical and significant solutions. The initial approach is triage implementation, which entails introducing a three-tiered structure of service providers, which completely changes the way patients are treated. Dental care practitioners are categorized into different levels under this system based on their specialization and level of experience. General dentists might provide basic dental treatment in the first tier, more specialized dental care in the second tier (such as hospital dental department) and complex procedures and surgeries in the top tier. This approach allows patients to be seen by physicians who best suit their needs. Not only does it optimize patient flow, but it also drastically cuts down on wait times because patients are promptly and efficiently sent to the appropriate level of treatment. Additionally, ADC's Educational Programs are critical in improving general dentists' expertise. In order to address a wider range of dental conditions, general dentists can broaden their skill set by offering focused educational courses and seminars. In addition to empowering dentists, this continuous learning approach raises the standard of care provided to

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patients. The burden placed on specialized tiers is reduced when general dentists become more skilled in advanced treatments, resulting in a more equitable and effective distribution of patient cases throughout the service levels. These strategies can help make ADC's service provider structure more effective and efficient, eventually resulting in shorter wait times and excellent customer satisfaction.

Future planning

Regarding ADC's long-term planning, three main strategic projects serve as cornerstones for improved service delivery and sustainable expansion. Infrastructure development is essential to get started. More than just a structural addition, the quick completion of the new dental building represents ADC's dedication to modernization and capacity increase. Effective resource management is essential to this progress, both financially and in terms of incorporating state-of-the-art dental equipment and patient-centred facilities. More space is not the only goal of this new infrastructure; it also aims to create a conducive healing environment and streamline service delivery, ultimately cutting down on wait times and enhancing patient satisfaction. Second, seeking research sponsorship is a bold move to solidify ADC's position as a pioneer in dental health innovation. ADC's is putting itself at the forefront of cutting-edge procedures and approaches in addition to advancing dental science by aggressively pursuing sponsorships for dental research. This program guarantees patients the newest and best dental care available while improving the centre's reputation. Finally, creating specialized clinics is a strategic step towards individualized treatment. ADC's has made accommodations for the different needs of its patient base by establishing distinct clinics for its staff and overseas visitors. These clinics improve the patient experience

by providing specialized treatments that address particular linguistic, cultural or occupational demands. This division makes it possible to provide care that is more targeted and effective, which is crucial in a multicultural and global community. When taken as a whole, these three projects depict a progressive, patient-focused dental facility that is not only solving present issues but also clearing the path for future dental care excellence.

Discussion

Implementation plan

Timeline: By implementing an automatic waiting list validation mechanism within the next three months, ADC is well-positioned to progress in the short term. By keeping patient data current and correct, this streamlined strategy lowers the possibility of needless treatment delays. ADC plans to launch its instructional programs and three-tier service provider structure (hospital dental department) in six months as a mid-term strategy. Through a triage system, this comprehensive approach not only maximizes patient care but also invests in general dentists' professional development. The dual-focused initiative seeks to promote on-going professional development and increase the overall effectiveness of dental care delivery. As a long-term strategy, over 18 months, ADC's hopes to have the new dental building completed. This aggressive yet well-planned schedule guarantees the timely addition of modern amenities to the infrastructure. The long-term strategy aligns with ADC's dedication to steady expansion, improved patient care and a dental facility that is prepared for the future (Table 1).

Table 1. Responsibilities and resources.

Initiative	Responsible parties	Resource type	Source of resources
Automated validation system	IT department, in collaboration with dental staff	Financial	Albaha Health Cluster Budget (AHCB)
Three-tier service provider system (activate 2 nd tier and launch general dentists cluster)	Dental management in coordination with HR at Albaha health cluster	Financial and human	AHCB for HR and training expenses
Educational programs	Training and development department in collaboration with dental experts	Financial and human	Allocated from education funds, sponsorships and AHCB
Infrastructure development	Project management office and construction team	Financial and human and time	AHCB, construction loans and potential donors

Key performance indicators

Upon completion of the project, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will be assessed to ascertain whether the goals and objectives that were set are met. Integrally, patient satisfaction comes first. Surveys on patient satisfaction will be carried out regularly, emphasizing patients' experiences with waiting times and the quality of care they received. This information is crucial for identifying areas that require development as well as for generating successful strategies. Waiting time reduction is another important KPI. The group will keep close tabs on and evaluate how long patients have to wait for different

treatments. The intention is to significantly decrease these timeframes in order to enhance patient satisfaction and facilitate access to essential dental treatment. Finally, a careful examination of ADC Patient Care's operational effectiveness will be conducted. This entails evaluating the impact of the modifications that have been implemented on the clinic's daily operations. In order to make sure that the clinic operates efficiently, the team looks at things like staff utilization, workflow and resource allocate ion.

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Challenges and mitigation

Proactive strategies are crucial in the context of transformative change at ADC, as challenges are unavoidable. Employees who are used to the current procedures may develop resistance to change [4]. Lewin's 3-step change model of unfreezing, movement and refreezing can be used when implementing change in a hospital [5]. As a result, comprehensive employee engagement and training initiatives will be implemented to address this, promoting comprehension and a feeling of common purpose. Financial limitations can sometimes provide challenges and necessitate careful budget prioritization. The key will be strategic planning, emphasizing projects that complement goals and financial constraints. Besides, it is critical to have effective communication with healthcare professionals during changes. The dedication to improved channels of communication will guarantee openness and confidence among patients and healthcare providers. Furthermore, establishing a bidirectional communication channel facilitates more efficient patient engagement by giving them prompt feedback and treatment progress updates. As a result, patients will be informed through frequent updates and clear information dissemination, which will provide a supportive environment during these transitional times.

Leader must Be/Has:

- Good communication skills, trustworthy make everyone feels valued and heard, gives constructive criticisms and tries as much as possible.
- Limits conflict between colleagues, creating a good team spirit and encourages a peaceful environment.
- Great leadership, transparent and clear about what he expects from subordinate.
- Ability to recognize competent and adequate people, motivate them, support them succeed.
- Detail oriented, driven by success and always achieve targeted goal.
- Up to date with technology in order to achieve a high efficiency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with an ambitious goal in mind, ADC is changing how dental care is provided. The implementation of inventive tactics like the automated validation system, the advanced three-tier service provider system and a planned approach to upcoming innovations demonstrate a strong dedication to improving patient experiences and optimizing workflows. The planned actions, which are distinguished by well-considered timelines and resource allocation, demonstrate

the center's commitment to making meaningful and long-lasting advancement. In particular, ADC is not just adjusting; it is dedicated to making a difference by emphasizing patient satisfaction, cutting down on wait times and increasing operational effectiveness. Even while this path has its challenges, it is a positive step toward a future in dental healthcare that is more patient-centred and efficient.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors report no conflict and/or competing of interest.

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