

Chandio A et al., Arch Gen Intern Med 2019, Volume 3 | DOI: 10.4066/2591-7951-C1-023

CAN “NO SHOWS” TO HOSPITAL APPOINTMENT BE AVOIDED?

Chandio A, Mahmood A, Shaikh Z, Chandio K and Naqvi SA

Antrim Area Hospital, UK

Introduction: Non-attendance is a common source of inefficiency in a health service, wasting time, resources, potentially lengthening waiting lists, increases patient suffering, morbidity and has received little attention. Patient failure to attend hospital outpatient appointments has a significant impact on the ability of hospitals to provide efficient and effective services.

Aim of study: To analysis risk factor of non-attendance in a group of patients who are unlikely to attend again.

Method & Material: Prospective study of patients referred to surgical clinics Antrim area Hospital Northern Ireland from April 2017 to August 2017. Survey was a structured on a telephonic interview. Including new referrals from general practitioners, accident & emergency department, and medical department & review surgical patients.

Results: Fifty patients contributed to the survey 27 were female & 23 male ratio 1.17:1. Age range from 17-89 years, mean age 56. There were total 42 clinics sessions and total numbers of the patients to be seen were 504, only 454 were seen in the out-patient clinics but 50 patients were DNA including 22 new patients, 25 review & 3 referrals from other teams.

Discussion: Many follow-up appointments are sent inappropriately to patients who do not want further attention. This study, indicating how risk factor analysis can identify a group of patients who are unlikely to attend again after one missed appointment, though efforts to improve attendance rates seem appropriate to conserve resources, no definite recommendations can be made on the results of this study. Despite optimizing the operation of the clinic, the non-attendance rate remained unsatisfactory, and comparable to the average. Telephone reminders are a very effective method of increasing attendance in a hospital-based adolescent clinic. The reminder is a consistently effective intervention whether the message is delivered to the patient, to the parent or other family member, or to a telephone answering machine. As there is no identifiable predictor for non-attendance apart from a longer waiting time, any maneuvers or interventions to improve attendance rate are unlikely to be significantly fruitful. A significant improvement in the proportion of patients attending outpatient's appointments can be made by a simple reminder telephone call one to three days after attendance at the ED. The poor compliance with attendance at outpatient clinic appointments in patients referred from Emergency Departments (EDs) is a major problem in public hospitals.

Conclusion: system of telephonic calling by clinic receptionist of all the patients should be made prior to Clinic to overcome the issue of DNA. Patients who were given longer appointments than 2-3 weeks should get an additional reminder either by post, electronic mail, mobile (SMS) text messaging where appropriate which may turn up a suitable means of improving patient attendance.

BIOGRAPHY

Chandio A is a surgeon specializing in general surgery. He is employed by the NHS Trust. He is graduated from Chandka Medical College Larkana in 1988. He has obtained his training in various specialties of general surgery (general surgery, urology, emergency medicine, vascular, breast & endocrine, and colorectal) in Ireland and UK. He is awarded as FEBS/Coloproctology in 2018 by European Surgical (Coloproctology) Board. He has obtained comprehensive training in general surgery. He routinely performs general surgical operations in NHS Hospital. He also actively participates in the teaching of medical students and junior doctors.

chandioashfaq@yahoo.com



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