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Improving productivity of outpatient clinics by reduction of "No Shows"

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"No shows" is a critical management issue in outpatient clinics operations. It occurs in cases where the patient does not arrive to a scheduled appointment or a patient cancels the appointment at a point of time that does not enable appointing another patient. Research results present no shows of 10-30% with clinics like pediatrics with 80%. Research findings point out various causes as: geographical distance, long waiting time to the appointment date (patient forgets), long waiting time resulting in 'no need to visit the clinic' situation, period of the year (e.g. bad weather), socioeconomics issues, patient's age; native language; demographic sector and culture, leaving work place and children's care. The issue of "no shows" may be resolved using overbooking. More patients are scheduled for a given period to override the phenomena. Implementation may cause situations where in a specific hour both the scheduled patient and the patient due to overbooking arrive creating longer waiting time and service providers' overtime. An effective overbooking strategy balances patients' waiting time and service providers' idle time and minimizes overtime. The study researched a community neurological clinic. Daily service hours were 09:00-15:00. No shows level was 33% with 10 min waiting time. An economic analysis revealed that the optimal revenue will result with an overbooking of 10 patients. Various overbooking strategies were examined. Results show an improvement in number of treated patients, service providers' idle time together with minor increase in overtime hours.

Biography

Gad Vitner holds BSc and MSc degrees in Industrial Engineering and Management from the Technion Israel Institute of Technology and a PhD degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering from USC in LA. He started his career in Ben-Gurion University and after few years joined industry working for many years in various manufacturing and service companies. In 2000, he returned to academy joining the Ruppin Academic Center where he developed a new school of engineering and acted as the School Dean for 6 years. His research interests are: Operations Management mainly in areas: Health Care and Agriculture, Service Engineering, Quality Management and Project Management.

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