

**A STUDY OF THE PATIENTS' WAITING TIME AT THE
PHARMACY COUNTER, HOSPITAL KULIM**

Prepared by

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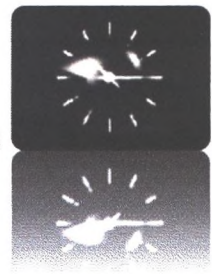
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify patient waiting time and to investigate the factors that contribute to the interruption of waiting time, it's related to the National Pharmacy charter of waiting time stated that more than 90% of the prescription should be dispenses within 30minutes. An observational retrospectively study was carried out in outpatient pharmacy department in Kulim Hospital. From the total 21,562 prescription, 11,000 were included in this study. Data were collected through Queue Management System (QMS) where it states patient's arrival and dispense time. Result shows that more than 97% of the prescriptions were dispensed in less than 30 minutes, and other 3% was delayed. There are factors that can leads to the delay such as long list of prescription, wrong dosage, insufficient counters for dispensing process and many more. The patients' waiting time issue should not be take seriously by the hospital but the patients satisfaction is very important thing to make sure the services given is the best. Besides, delay in waiting time may lead to poor patients' compliance. So that our attention is necessary, therefore be made to overcome the delay of waiting time.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Patient's waiting time is defined as 'the length of time from when the patient entered the pharmacy to the time the patient actually received his or her prescription and left the pharmacy'. A patient's experience of waiting can radically influence his/her perceptions of service quality. In a study carried out at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA, showed that the overall satisfaction of patients with pharmaceutical services is closely relate to their satisfaction with waiting time. Long waiting time is one of a reason why some patients do not have their prescriptions filled in a particular pharmacy. This shows the significance of waiting time on pharmacy services and support. Patients attended to in various units within the hospital system but almost consistently, a high percentage of outpatient customers visit the hospital pharmacy unit for their drug needs. These patients leave the doctors' consulting clinics and any of the other units at various times thus constituting a random arrival rate at the pharmacy, where the dispensing activities take place sequentially. Queues number when the rate of patient arrival at the pharmacy is greater than the service rate. Excessive patient waiting time challenges pharmacy efficiency. Such delay leads to patient dissatisfaction and thus may eventually result in loss of support in a competitive health care system. It can also lead to poor patient compliance with instructions given at the pharmacy. Therefore, there is a need to carry out a systematic study on patient waiting time in a pharmacy, with a view to identifying the factors that affect waiting time and recommend ways of minimizing the delay. To this end, this study sought to find answers to the following research questions in the context of a Kulim hospital:

- i. What is the average patient is waiting time in the pharmacy?
- ii. Are patients well exposed towards the prescription filling procedures and the pharmacy dispensing procedures?
- iii. What time may be attributing to the process and delay components of pharmacy dispensing operations?
- iv. What are the possible operational problems that may lead to excessive patient is waiting times?