



GO WITH THE FLOW

Streamlining the patient flow process



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The Challenge

The number of dental assistants employed have increased to provide support for patient's flow through the dental clinic and to provide assistance to the dental therapist providing dental care at the chair side.

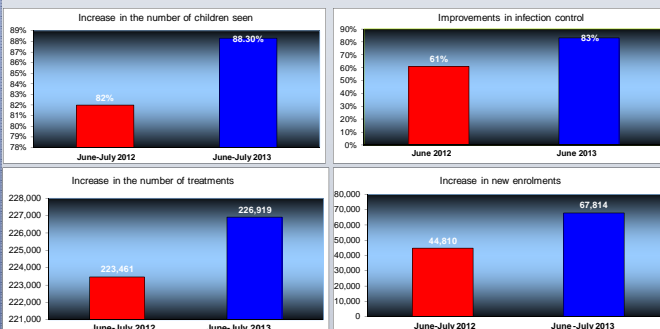
The roles and responsibilities of the dental therapist and dental assistant while understood, were not consistent or well documented. Poor role clarity led to reduced productivity and inconsistent processes.

For 2012 the new infection control process was audited at 61%. The number of children seen were only at 82%, below the expected target of 90%.

The Goal

To observe and process map the tasks of the dental assistant and the dental therapist during the patient flow through the dental clinic in a workbook. Process maps and tasks defined in the workbook would improve role clarity, efficiencies and effectiveness of patient experience and increase productivity.

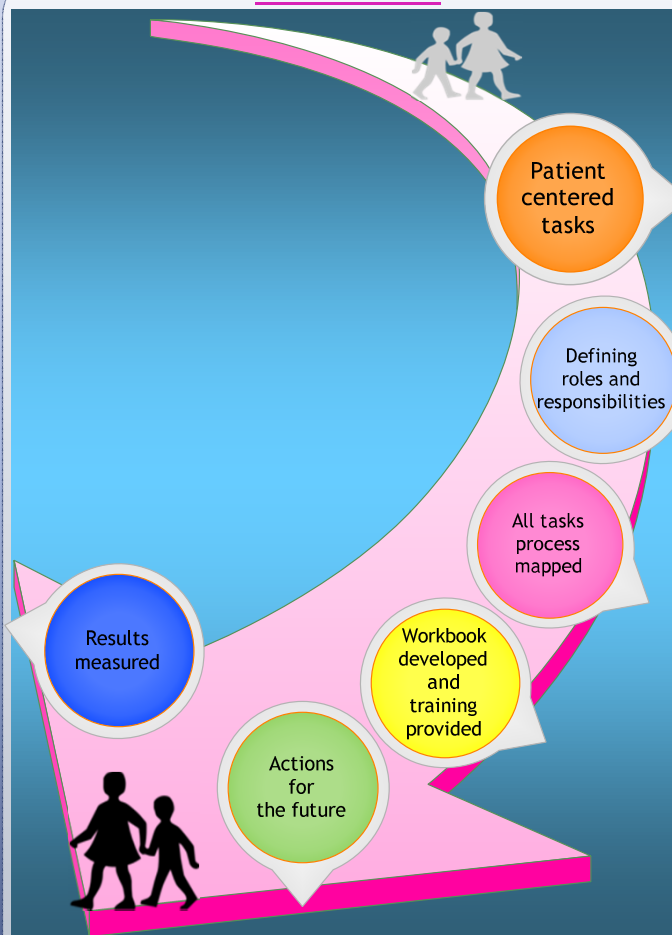
The Result: Improvements 2012-2013



The project goals achieved

- Efficiencies were achieved with patient booking systems, follow ups and reminders which contributed in an increase in the number of total children seen for the year July - June 2013 over July - June 2012. The number of children seen increased from 82% to 88.3% respectively.
- Increases in the number of treatments provided to the children for the same period increased by 3458. Effective chair side support provided by the dental assistant improved patient experience by enabling more treatments to be carried out at each visit within a reduced timeframe. The dental therapist was also supported by the dental assistant in providing the care to the patient.
- The number of new enrolments increased by 22365 for the year July - June 2013. Assigned administrative tasks were streamlined for the dental assistant to set times of the day enabling more time to be spent on new enrolments.
- Improvements in the effectiveness of the infection control procedures undertaken by the dental assistant increased by 22%. This improvement indicates that the process maps defining tasks provided clarity and were better understood.

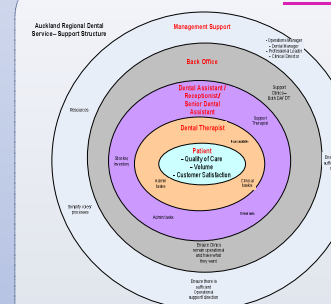
The Patient Flow



Future Actions

- Ongoing auditing against the workbook process
- Ongoing training and education for staff

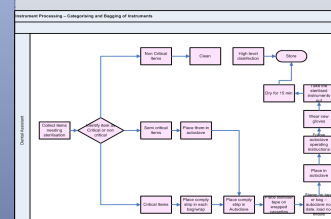
The Approach



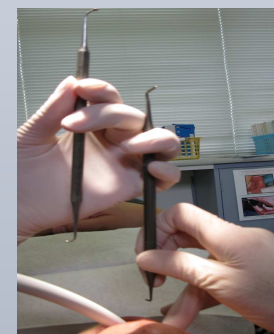
A new understanding of a model of care was developed with the patient at the centre of every task at every level. Roles and clarity of tasks were focussed on the patient flow through the clinic



Input from team leaders contributed to defining the procedures and tasks. Rewriting the dental assistant job description provided clear expectations focussing on the patient flow process



All tasks were process mapped including opening and closing of the clinic. This process map explains the step by step tasks required for categorising instruments into critical / non critical so that standards for instrument processing could be met by the dental assistants



The workbook includes step by step explanations using photographs. Here is an example of a step using a photograph of how to transfer instruments from the dental assistant to the dental therapist during treatment procedures.

Training of all staff on the workbook and the clinical procedures have been completed .