

Waiting for Pharmacy? Evaluating Delayed Discharges from Transit Lounge

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Background

A three-month audit in 2016-2017 conducted by nursing staff of delayed discharges from Transit Lounge (TL) identified that 241 patients were delayed due to pharmacy.

Average patient time in TL was 94 minutes; however pharmacy data indicated that over 80% of prescriptions were completed in less than 60 minutes.

Aim

To determine if delayed discharges from Transit Lounge flagged by nursing staff as due to "pharmacy" were a result of pharmacy discharge processes.

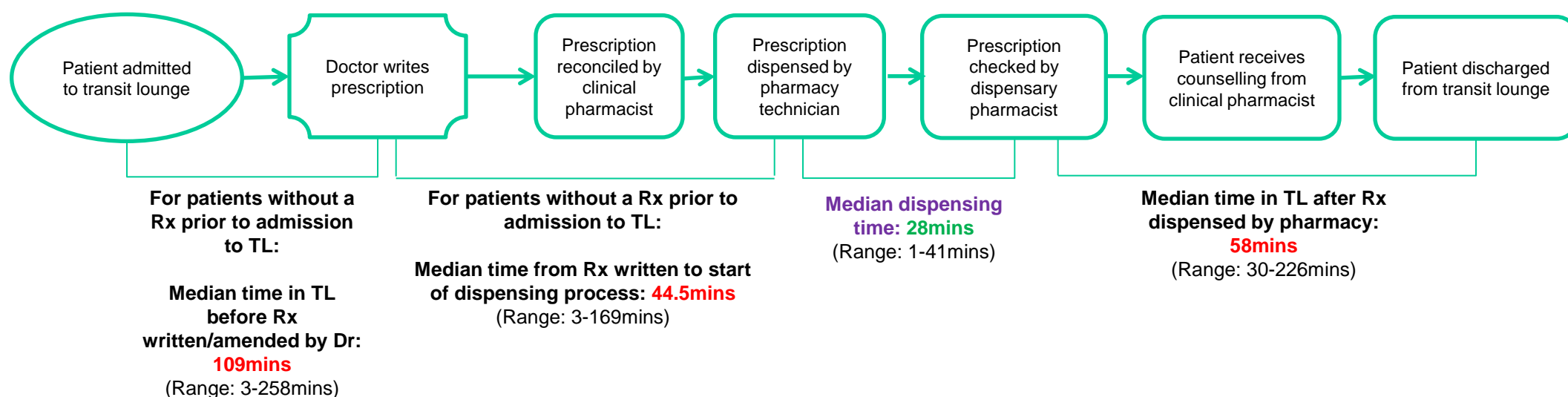
Method

- Of the 241 patients identified by nurses, 21 patients with the longest wait times were selected for retrospective review.
- Electronically generated time points from hospital systems were used to identify the points for delay.
- Key time points included: time of patient transfer to TL, time prescription was written/amended, time prescription dispensed, time prescription checked, and time of patient discharge.
- Prescription processing time was from the start of dispensing to completion of pharmacist checking.

Implications for practice

Since the review, some changes have occurred which help to reduce long waits in Transit Lounge.

1. A Transit Lounge *Checklist* has been developed which asks if a prescription has been written by medical staff
2. The general medical pharmacy and medical teams have been working hard together to write and screen prescriptions (and dispense if possible) the day before confirmed or projected discharge
3. The pharmacy team has been collecting data on prescriptions written and prescriptions dispensed the day before discharge



Results

Median (IQR) time in TL for the 21 patients was 210 (190-252) minutes. Discharge medication supply occurred for 11 (52%) patients. For these prescriptions, median (IQR) prescription processing time was 35 (21-38) minutes.

Eight (38%) prescriptions were written by medical teams prior to the patient transfer to TL. For prescriptions not written prior to transfer, median time (IQR) to generate a prescription was 109 (52-158) minutes.

Of the 21 patients:

- 48% of patients (n=8) did not have a prescription processed by Maroondah Pharmacy
- 62% of patients (n=13) did not have a prescription written by doctors prior to going to Transit Lounge

Of the 11 patients who received discharge medications, 10 remained in TL for >30 minutes after the prescription was finalised. Reasons for delayed departure were: intravenous medication administration, observation, medical review, and waiting for transport.

Conclusions

This review indicates that pharmacy is not the main reason for delayed TL discharges. In fact, prescription processing times meet the target of less than 60 minutes more than 80% of the time.

The time prescription is written by medical staff appears to have the most impact on timely receipt of discharge medications.

