

ENHANCING PATIENT EXPERIENCE IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DURING SURGE

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Aim

The Acute and Emergency Care department (A&E) is a vital access point for patients who require immediate medical care, especially during the pandemic's surge in infectious cases.

This project aims to enhance patient experience in A&E by focusing on two critical areas for improvement: communication and management of patient expectations. Through identifying various improvement areas, implementing effective strategies, and adopting a patient-centred approach, the team will be able to streamline processes, improve communication, and ensure availability of adequate resources to create a more efficient and compassionate environment for patients, visitors and staff alike.

Background

With the delayed opening of WH campus, KTPH A&E has to manage a high A&E workload and a high inpatient BOR of > 100% resulting in an average bed wait time of 18.7 hours for admissions in CY2023. There was an increase in anxious and frustrated patients and their Next-of-Kin (NOK) due to:

- Care team's challenges in delivering timely care while managing high workload and long admission wait times.
- Doctors being unable to provide regular/constant updates due to their focus on patient care.
- Proper management of patient property in A&E being overlooked.
- Visitation restriction due to space constraints in A&E.

Interventions/Implementation

The following are the key interventions :

"A&E Journey at KTPH" Guide

This provides a visual guide of patient's journey in A&E and helps manage patient and NOK expectations. This information is shared via the TVs in P3 and A&E Care Corner.

Visitation Policies

Visitation restrictions were lifted across A&E; All-day visitations are allowed but limited to 1 NOK at a time in certain zones in A&E. Patients in P3 are also allowed 1 NOK per patient throughout their visit.

Caregiver Companionship

Allowing 1 caregiver per patient at bedside from 8am to 8pm, with the exception if patient requires extended or overnight caregiver support which will be evaluated on case-by-case basis. To be initiated by care team or NOK.

Patient Updates

The "NOK Update Status" column was added into the EPIC ED dashboard as a reminder for the care team to provide timely updates to NOKs.

Property Management

Patients are to pass their belongings to NOKs. Those who arrive without NOKs, clinical team communicates on how their properties will be managed, leveraging on technology such as the Rover phone to upload images of collected property in EPIC.

Onward 2026

Quality and Patient Safety

Patients and NOKs are assured that quality care is rendered to patients by timely clinical updates given by care team.

Operational Resilience

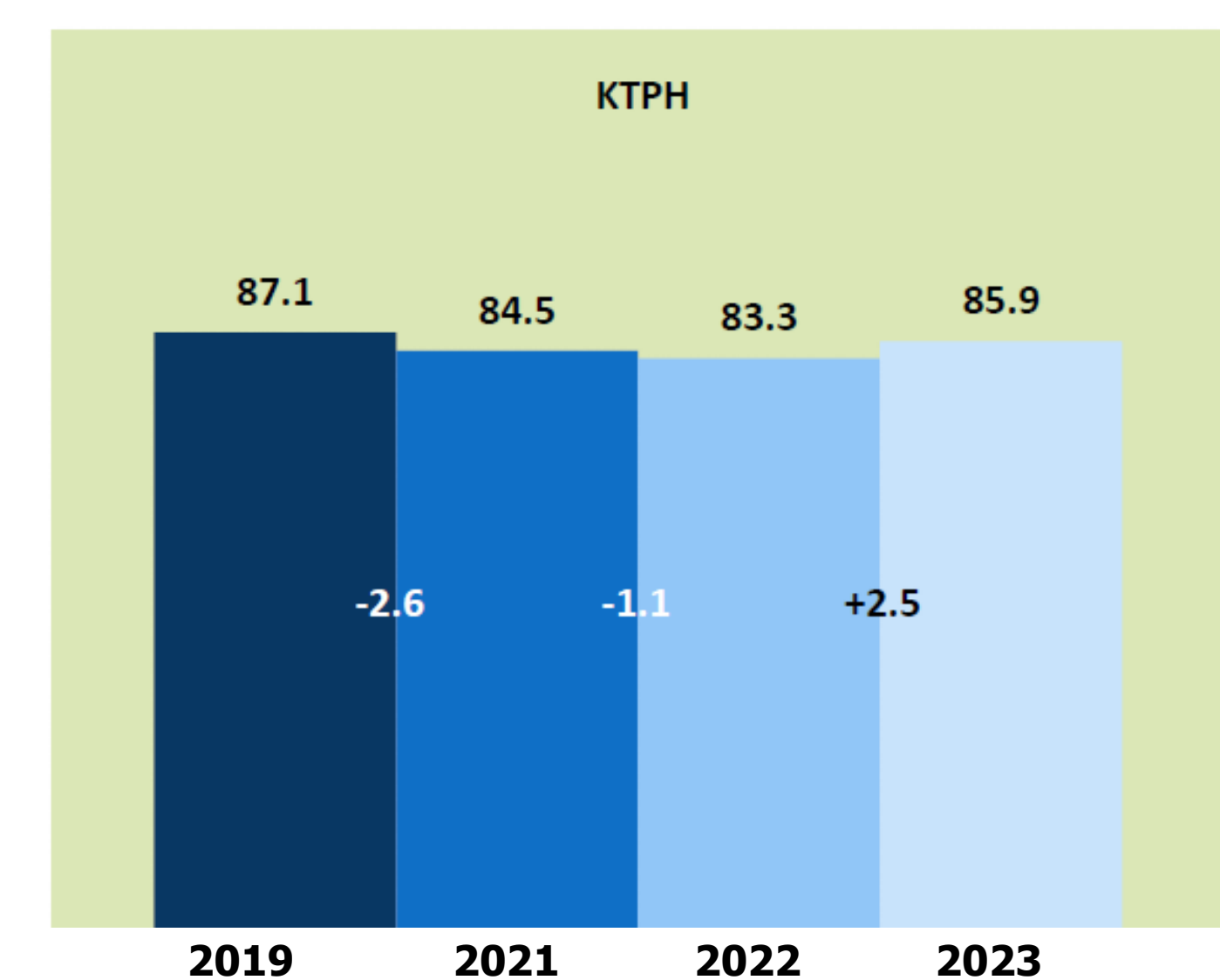
To constantly re-design workflows to better manage patient flow, uphold quality of care rendered to patients, patient expectations and staff well-being.

Staff Well-Being

Visitation flexibility and Caregiver initiative to relief nurses of tasks. This increases support for the care team's overall well-being and morale, encouraging staff to be more satisfied in the work place.

Results & Outcomes

MOH Patient Experience Survey Results Rating: 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023



The MOH PES 2023 showed KTPH A&E has improved by 2.5%, with a rating of 85.9%. This is slightly above the national benchmark of 85%. The survey tracks patients' experiences across PHIs and tracks patient experience ratings for year-on-year comparison. This 2.5% increase in 2023 has been attributed to:

- Increased efficiency in communication between care team and patients/NOKs → Overall improvement in patient experience and satisfaction.
- All-day visitation → Anxious NOKs reassured that patients are well attended to.
- Caregivers also help to relief nurses of mundane tasks (patients who want attention/patients' minute requests), → Nurses able to attend to other patients who require more urgent care.

Conclusion

- ✓ Effective communication is crucial for keeping patients and their next of kin informed about care processes, treatment options, and potential delays, which helps alleviate anxiety and build trust.
- ✓ Managing patient expectations involves setting realistic wait times and treatment outcomes, reducing frustration and enhancing satisfaction.
- ✓ Together, these strategies are essential for fostering a positive and supportive atmosphere in the A&E.

Team Members

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