

Managing demand through improving practice management



GENERAL PRACTICE
workforce

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A definition

Managing demand is the process of getting people the care they need, when they need it, in a way that leaves them and the providers of the service satisfied with the health care encounter.

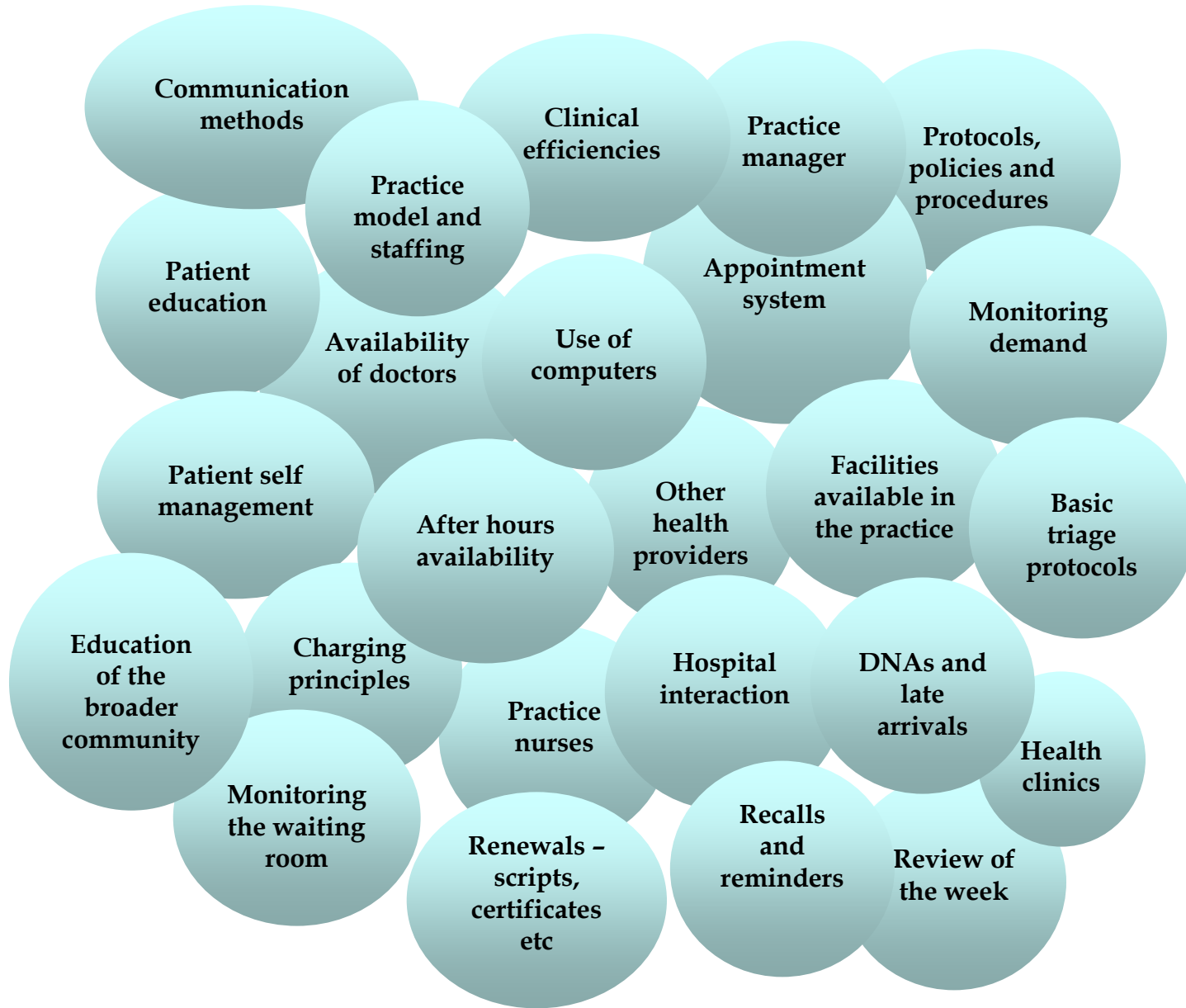


The project

- Research and literature review
- Working with several medical practices/hospitals/ambulance
- Observe at the practice
- Written reports with suggested reforms
- Continue assisting, coaching



Patient dissatisfaction



Practice dissatisfaction

Access



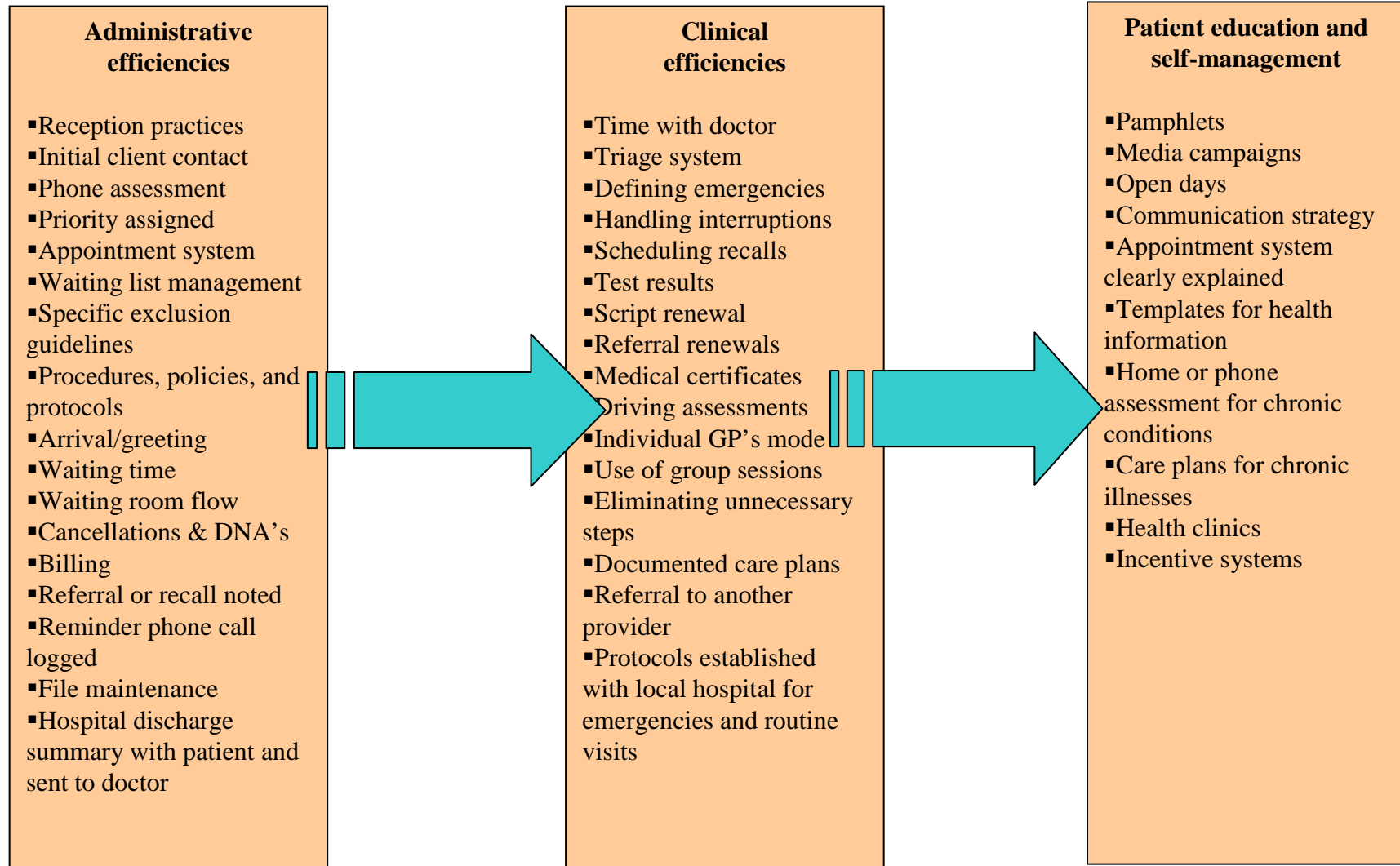
- General Practices operate in a commercial market where demand for services often outstrips capacity.
- This creates access problems.
- Access is not more appointment slots, or working harder.
- Access is about proactively managing demand through managing appointments and patient expectations.

Demand management requires general practices to:

- review their internal processes to ensure the services are efficient, of high quality and targeted to the needs of clients
- address the broader health needs of the community through health promotion and early intervention activities that take a preventative approach to health



Elements in demand management



Expected results

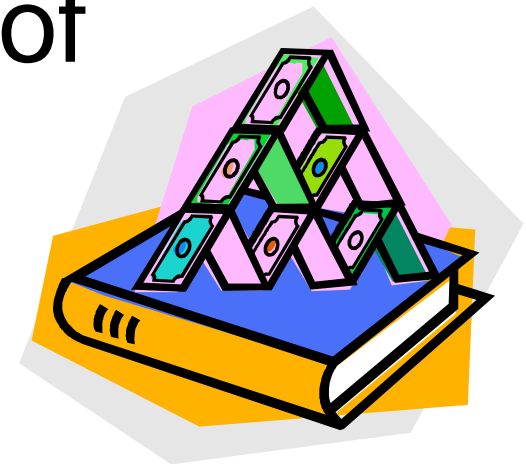
- Greater control over working day
- Same day appointments
- Greater continuity of care achieved
- Increase in chronic illness care
- Practice income increases
- Reduction in DNAs
- Morale greatly increased
- High satisfaction in doctors, staff, patients

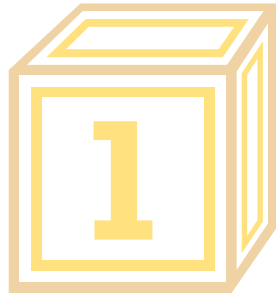


But is it really about demand management?

We found it was more about a solid foundation of good practice management.

And there are some key elements in that foundation.





The Practice Manager



- Professional, qualified practice manager
- Effectively managing the human resources of the practice
- Ensuring that policies are implemented and procedures followed
- With appropriate delegations of authority, in writing, communicated to all staff, and consistently observed by everyone



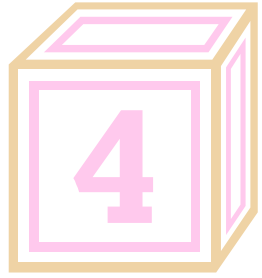
Clear articulation of the scope of practice

- Defines the practice and the population it services
- Written statements about:
 - the range of health services provided
 - the categories of patients who will be accepted or not accepted
 - the type of after-hours care provided
 - delineation of the roles & responsibilities of the practice doctors and nurses



Consistently applied protocols

- Clear and observed protocols agreed by clinical and non-clinical staff
- Inconsistencies will cause confusion, errors and frustration
- Above all, open discussion needs to occur between doctors, nurses and receptionists on the procedures and policies to be followed



Effective communication system

- Strategy for in-house, patient and community communication
- Regular practice meetings are essential
- Effective ways to inform patients of the practice policies and any changes
- A systematic way in which the practice handles complaints



Performance management framework

- A robust performance management framework for both reception and clinical staff within the practice
- May require a review of position descriptions and duties and the development of agreed performance criteria for all staff
- May need training for all concerned



Ability to see 'beyond the here and now'

- Key people who can see things not as they currently are, but as they might be
- Look beyond the current situation, and develop sustainable strategies for dealing with issues in the future
- Move from 'this is the way we have always done it'
- Respond with innovation and timeliness to changing conditions

The six foundation stones



1. The Practice Manager
2. A clearly articulated scope of practice
3. Consistently applied protocols, policies and procedures
4. An effective communication system
5. A performance management framework
6. Looking beyond 'the here and now'



I'm always interested
in feedback,
experiences and
advice!

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