The Impact of Text Messaging Service on Default Rates to Colposcopy Clinic

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Abstract

National Health Service (NHS) England statistics reveal that “Did not attend” (DNA) rates cost £600 million/year. NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHSCSP) data for 2012-2013 show that DNA rates to colposcopy clinic in England were 10.1%. DNA not only delays the diagnosis and impacts the patient care but also has implications on resources and finances and healthcare system.

There has been a recent increase in DNA rates to our colposcopy clinic, which is a busy tertiary hospital and cancer referral center. Several strategies that are proven to reduce the DNA rates include postal reminders, text messages and telephone calls¹. Hence we have trialed the impact of text message reminders on DNA rates to colposcopy and we would like to share our experience.

Objectives

To evaluate the impact of text message reminders on DNA rates to colposcopy clinic

Methods

Text message reminders were sent to patients one working day prior to their scheduled appointment. DNA rates with and without text reminders were compared over a period of four weeks.

Results

A total of 107 text reminders were sent, out of which 90 were successfully delivered.

The default rates are as below:

- DNA rate with texts: 9.3% (10/107)
- DNA rate when texts were delivered: 5.6% (6/90)

On comparison, DNA rate without text reminders was 16% (19/118)

Conclusions

The default rates were significantly lower with text reminders. This not only reminds but also gives opportunity for patients to change their appointment if needed. This overall has implications to the patient care and impacts on resources to the healthcare provider.

References