"m CHANNELLING" – A FREE AUTOMATED APPOINTMENT SYSTEM FOR GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS IN SRI LANKA

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Sri Lanka is a country which provides a free and high quality health care service to its citizens. However, the service delivery standards need to be improved as the longer waiting time compromises the quality of care provided. The objective of this study was to introduce an affordable solution to improve the waiting time at OPD which benefits both the patients and hospital staff as an extension to "eHospital – Dompe"project. "mchannelling" is a fully automated, IVR (Interactive Voice Response) based, free appointment system from government hospitals to general public. The hot line (0711-370370) is open for any telecommunication network and any time of the day. The automated IVR enables the patients to select a convenient time slot for OPD consultation from "mChannelling" enabled hospitals, launched at District Hospital-Dompe. The "mChannelling" solution prompts the caller to select the hospital at the beginning. Then it is redirected to the selection of the date and then to the consultation time slot. Once the appointment is confirmed, a confirmation SMS is sent to the caller indicating the date and time of the appointment. Upon presenting the conformation SMS, the hospital reception will check the validity and send patient to the doctor and dedicated counter to collect drugs. Only standard call charges are applicable for this solution. The appointment schedule is updated by the hospital administration using web based hospital admin portal. "mChannelling" enables patients to obtain appointments for next seven days and the overall waiting time is minimized to 30 minutes. The patients are benefited with hassle free service with patient friendly environment at "eHospital"-Dompe. The authority of scheduling appointments is with the hospital authority and Mobitel is hosting the solution. The Ministry of Health (WP) has identified "mChannelling" to deploy in all "eHospitals" in the province.

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