

Ensuring On-Time First Case OR Starts by Preventing Registration Delay

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- The first case on-time start (FCOTS) rate was 72% in February 2025.
- The seventh room opened in March 2025, and the FCOTS rate dropped to 38%.
- The expansion increased patient volume without corresponding adjustments to the registration process.
- Registration delays prevented patients from being transferred promptly to the Surgical Processing Area (SPA), disrupting the start of the first cases and cascading into subsequent surgical delays

Purpose:

Modify registration process to reduce patient wait times, decrease delays for first case start times, & increase cost effectiveness in the OR.

Framework:

- The project followed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model, implementing an effective registration process change.
- The plan was to identify the problem within the registration department in processing surgical outpatients and identify the changes to achieve improvement in first OR case start time.
- The do was that we implemented a change in surgical registration process and tested the change in collecting data and analyzing the process. The proposed change was to add an additional registrar so patients could be registered simultaneously at the bedside as well as in the registration department.
- The study analyzed the collected data by following the registration process of surgical outpatients from front door to OR, identified barriers and delays in the process, and developed a plan for improvement of the registration process.
- The act was to adopt a new plan while improving our patient satisfaction and first O.R. start case percentage.

Objectives: Upon reading this poster the learner will be able to summarize the importance of a streamlined registration process to ensure on time first care operating room starts, correlate the importance of the patient registration process and the importance it plays in preparing the patient for the operating room.

METHODS

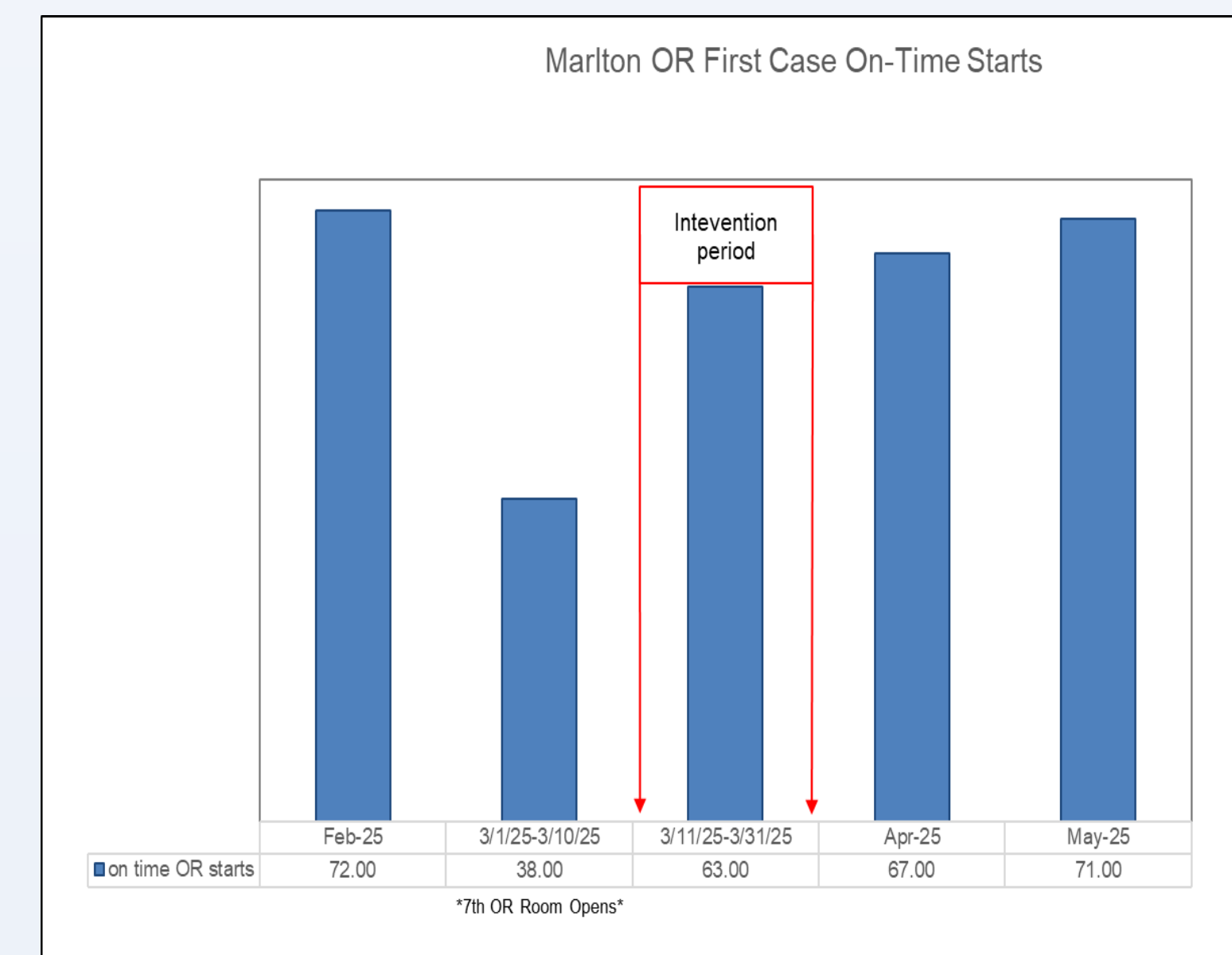
- On March 1, the patient liaison- responsible for guiding patients from hospital entry through registration to the surgical processing area (SPA) - was shadowed from 0530-1000.
- Patient flow was timed from front door arrival time through registration to entry into the SPA for surgical preparation and OR start time readiness.
- Accessibility for patients requiring accommodation (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, supplemental oxygen) was assessed.
- Communication among the patient liaison, registration staff, and SPA personnel was evaluated.



RESULTS

Key Findings:

- The evaluation revealed registration delays were a barrier to patient flow causing patients to not be ready for their OR start time.
- Patients arriving at 0530 did not begin registration until 0540 am. Manual processes including printing and annotation surgical schedules consumed valuable time.
- The physical layout of the registration desk posed accessibility challenges for patients using mobility aids.
- On the observed day, 3 patients in wheelchairs experienced significant delays. With 2 requiring over 15 minutes to reach SPA.
- A second registrar began work at 0630, which slightly improved thrupt but was insignificant to prevent first case delays. Lack of coordination between registrar and liaison also leads to patients unnecessarily waiting in the lobby.



DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

- OR delays are costly, with estimates of \$20-150 per minute depending on location and surgical specialty (Blair et al., 2024). Timely patient arrival to the surgical processing area (SPA) is essential for efficient pre-operative preparation, patient satisfaction, and maintaining OR schedules.
- Registration delays disrupt workflow and delays administration of critical pre-op medications. For example, certain procedures require medications to be given 30 minutes prior to a one-hour infusion, which in turn must conclude an hour before incision – delays in registration make timely administration and FCOTS unachievable.
- To address these inefficiencies, nursing met with leadership from SPA and registration.
- On March 16, a new process was implemented: 2 registrars now begin at 0530, 1 stationed directly in the SPA to provide bedside registration upon arrival.
- SPA nurses now generate consolidated reports, including arrival and start times, eliminating the registrars need to manually compile and annotate schedules. These changes have improved communication, reduced registration – related delays, and increased FCOTS rates, with the potential to enhance both operational efficiency and patient satisfaction (Mitchell et al., 2025).
- These process changes increased our FCOTS rate to 63% for March 16-31, 2025, 65% for April 2025, and 71% for May 2025. We believe the change in the registration process greatly improved our FCOTS and will increase patient satisfaction.

REFERENCES

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