

## Are SMS Reminders an Precursor to Outpatient Show-Ups?

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**Abstract :** Attendance rate for hospital outpatient appointments plays a pivotal role in operational efficiency of a hospital. Strategic interventions like 'reminder systems' prior to the scheduled appointment has proved to be an effective strategy for outpatient appointment 'show-ups'. This study is designed with an objective to assess the effectiveness of SMS reminders as an intervention to enhance the effectiveness of hospital outpatient attendance. Method: The survey was conducted at Columbia Asia Hosiptal, Bangalore. We surveyed 60 patients who had a scheduled outpatient appointment in Department of General Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Orthopedics department, as these departments had a heavy patient flow and had higher contributions to the top line of the hospital. Results: Majority (64%) of the patients preferred to be sent an SMS reminder on the outpatient appointment schedule. 37 (61%) respondents stated that the ideally, reminders could be effective only if they are sent 24-48 hours prior to the appointment schedule. 41(68%) respondents were of the opinion that a minimum of two reminders would be necessary to ensure patients show up for the appointment. 1% level of significance. It also observed that there is strong association between age and preference on mode of reminder (P=0.002).

**Keywords :** reminder systems, appointment show-ups, SMS reminders, health Information

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