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Designing Better Counters

05 Registration/Payment/ Pharmacy Counters

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05

Registration/ Payment/Pharmacy Counters

**A place to interact,
transact and provide the
human touch.**

Open. Accessible. Empathetic.

Counters can be so much more than just places to conduct transactions. They can also serve as platforms to share important information and provide that added human touch.

When the design of a counter is inviting and its staff, polite and knowledgeable, it helps put patients and their concerned family members at ease. A well-thought-out counter design can also empower staff to better understand visitors' concerns and display empathy during the course of interaction.

Read on to learn how thoughtful design can facilitate efficient exchanges, without compromising on the level of care and attention given.

**“ Now I can speak face-to-face
with the Polyclinic Staff at the
registration counter despite
being on a wheelchair. ”**

-Mr Teo MK, 58-year-old patient



National Heart Centre Singapore

5.1 Counters

Physical Design

1. **Registration counters:** Provide all low counters with two seats or a mix of counters.
 - Include wheelchair-friendly counters.
 - Low counters allow face-to-face interaction for wheelchair users and for those too weak to stand.
 - As longer time is spent registering, having more chairs at the registration area is preferred.
2. **Pharmacy/Payment counters:** Allocate at least 30% of total counter space to low counters, or a minimum of one low counter in smaller areas.

Less time is spent at the Pharmacy and Payment Counters, thus having both low and high counters is more efficient.
3. Where low counters are provided, the counter height shall not be more than 800mm from finished floor level (BCA'13).
4. Provide ledge for high/standing counters for patients/visitors to place their belongings during transactions.
5. Place dividers with rounded edge between counters for patient privacy.

Height of privacy dividers from finished floor level:
For standing counters: 1500mm
For sitting counters: 1300mm

Curved edges for safety to prevent injuries.
6. Include wheelchair mark out areas along the aisle of each row but ensure wheelchairs do not obstruct main thoroughfare.

Placing them in the front row may block other patients' view, while seating them in the back may prevent their family/caregiver from sitting next to them.
7. Ensure wheelchair mark out area is located near to low counter area.

Facilitates service access for wheelchair patients.



5.2 Signage and Voice Announcement

1. Include main name (REGISTRATION/PHARMACY/PAYMENT) in 4 languages.
Clear labelling of main service counters.
2. Font: Helvetica; All capitals. Minimum size: 150mm.
3. Match code and colour with directory information.
4. List subservices (e.g. Re-appointment) in English only.
5. Number all registration counters:
 - In black with contrasting background. Number size: 130mm, 3D optional (5mm thickness cut out acrylic)
 - Use up to 2 digits only if possible (01-99)*Using more than two digits to label the counters may cause the elderly difficulty in distinguishing the numbers.*
6. Use flashing numbers only to draw attention.
7. Introduce subzone queue panel. Include a directional arrow to direct patients to the counter area when their number is called.
8. Ensure all announcements are clear and audible. Use local voice talent as announcers.
Local voice talent may be easier to understand and sound more familiar to elderly patients.
9. **O**: Provide hearing enhancement system to help elderly or hearing impaired persons fitted with hearing aids to hear voice announcements clearly. BCA'13



Skip the Queue Register Yourself Here
For follow-up patients only

1 Scan NRIC/Appt card

2 Confirm mobile no. for "Q" reminder

3 Collect "Q" ticket & proceed to clinic

Note: For follow-up patients only. Please do your test/assessment, if any, before your consultation. If you are unsuccessful with self-registration, please proceed to the counter for assistance.

Singapore General Hospital



5.3 Self-Registration Kiosks

- Place self-registration kiosk before main counters at a prominent location.
Prominent placement of self-registration kiosks encourages usage and helps shorten registration counter queue.
- Use recess/flush mounting.
Reduces clutter and minimises cleaning requirements.
- Provide minimum 1 wheelchair-friendly kiosk.
Accessible and welcoming to wheelchair users.
- Include a large multilingual signage where possible above self-registration area.
Serves to attract attention and educate users.
- Have clear pictorial to guide patients on how to self-register.
Use of pictures cut across language barriers.
- Use simplified words and phrases only.
Long text may appear overwhelming to read.
- O**: Provide Service Ambassadors to assist/educate elderly who are less IT savvy in self-registration.

O: Optional