Case Study: Delay in Prescription Dispensing

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Figure . Fishbone Diagram summarizing the Main factors that Contribute to Delay in Prescription Dispensing

On this case, the use of the Fishbone Diagram helped to collect, organize, and summarize sources of potential variation in prescription dispensing process. This diagram display four major factor that contribute to delay in time for prescription dispensing, and, they are: Equipment and Supplies; Environmental, Rules/Policies/Procedures, and Staff/ People.

#### Equipment/Supplies.

The lack of a centralized tool for displaying *pending tasks* contributes to a lack of traceability of tasks. On this case, this can be represented as the lack of the awareness by the staff that a patient was waiting for a prescription and that the prescription needed a signature by the physician in charge.

#### Environmental.

The *lack of an effective communication with external stakeholder* can contribute to delays in processes, due to the fact that internal and external stakeholders do not have reliable way to communicate. This contributed to delays in prescription fulfill due to the cycle of going back and forth between pharmacy and physician without any clear expectation or urgency.

### Rules/Policies/Procedures

*Lack of a discharge policy*, on this case, allowed the patient to leave premises with an invalid prescription that will cause further delays in the process. On this case there were two *document issues* that contributed to this factor. First, main stakeholder (patient) received an *incomplete document* as a result of the *lack of procedures for document handling*, second factor. These two factors caused the patient to handle and delivery of an incomplete document to the pharmacy clerk. Additionally, the *lack of checklists for discharge* process allowed the patient to leave premises without detecting a problem with treatment or documents.

### Staff/People

On this area three factors were detected: *communication, lack of ownership from the staff,* and*, lack of knowledge/information*. In the case of the *communication*  factor, the *lack of task handling* and *direct communication handling* caused that the task for signing the prescription was not managed appropriately and the patient left premises with incomplete documentation. *Lack of ownership* by the staff also allowed that this task to be handled from one stakeholder from another without any clear expectation of the task goal, causing late delivery of a document that was incomplete. Finally, *the lack of knowledge/information* contributed to the patient not being able to identify that a document delivered to him was incomplete. As a result, the patient tried to use an incomplete document that contributed to delays in prescription dispensing.