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Implementing and evaluating outpatient record keeping systems (electronic and manual) in the Polonnaruwa District of Sri Lanka.

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The quality of data was- assessed by assessment of completeness of data of the manual OPO patient encounter form and the accuracy of data transfer from the manual to the electronic system. The availability of essential and important data recorded by MO/OPO, and at other patient encounter stations was above 75 percent in all hospitals. The adequacy and legibility of data were satisfactory. Morbidity recording averaged 88.3 percent in all hospitals. Notification status of the disease condition was noted in over 71 percent. The data compatibility between manual system and electronic system was 98 percent during data transfer, morbidity data of outpatients could be analyzed stratified by age and sex. Morbidity data according to Broad Disease Groups was available in more than 84.4 percent of patient records (range 84.4 percent to 94.2 percent). The Most prevalent diseases were respiratory diseases (38.4 percent), infectious and parasitic diseases (13 percent) and diseases of musculoskeletal and connective tissues(12.3 percent). Among OPD attendees, 24.9 percent were aged 31 to 49 years, 20.4 percent 5 to 16 years and 19.4 percent were 17 to 30 years. Females were more (average 55 percent) in all hospitals. With certain deviations in the rank order, the disease pattern remained similar in the different hospital categories. Both systems significantly increased the patient waiting time at the O'PD (P0.05). A significantly higher amount of time was spent with service providers in the manual system (pO.OOI). No significant difference was found in the overall time spent at the OPD between the manual and electronic systems. Registering the outpatients using a unique identification number not only facilitated record retrieval, but also provided out patient statistics in an accurate and a very comprehensive manner.