

Project Title

PAYNOW To Research Participants

Project Lead and Members

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Jing Wen, NEO Siew Shih

Organisation(s) Involved

KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Healthcare Family Group Involved in this Project

Healthcare Administration

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Healthcare Administrator

Project Period

Start date: 01 September 2022

Completed date: November 2022

Aims

To reduce administrative work and time spent in handling petty cash for reimbursement to research subjects within 3 months after implementation of the new Work Instruction (WI).

Background

Previously, cash was the primary mode of reimbursement for research subjects at KKH, which was time-consuming and labor-intensive for staff. The project aimed to align with the national directive for digital payments by implementing PAYNOW as an alternative to cash.

Methods

A Quality Improvement (QI) workgroup was formed to explore the use of PAYNOW for electronic fund transfers. The group established a workflow, conducted a pilot

project, and revised the process based on feedback, resulting in the implementation of a new Work Instruction on 01 September 2022.

Results

The time spent on research reimbursement by Clinical Research Coordinators (CRCs) was reduced by 74.6%, and the time spent by Finance staff decreased by 69.2%. The new workflow also eliminated the need for physical handling of cash, reduced errors, improved safety, and minimized administrative work.

Lessons Learnt

The transition to digital payments is effective in enhancing efficiency, reducing risks, and aligning with broader national initiatives. Regular evaluation and feedback are crucial for optimizing new workflows.

Conclusion

The implementation of PAYNOW for research reimbursement was successful in reducing time, improving efficiency, and ensuring compliance with national cashless directives. It is recommended to expand this approach to other research areas.

Project Category

Care & Process Redesign

Productivity, Time Saving

Keywords

PAYNOW, Digital Payment, Research Reimbursement, Cashless Transactions, Administrative Efficiency, Healthcare Finance, COVID-19 Adaptation, Electronic Fund Transfer, Quality Improvement, Workflow Optimization, Cross-Infection Risk Reduction, Cash Handling Reduction, Staff Productivity, Research Coordination

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PAYNOW To Research Participants



Singapore Healthcare Management 2023

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Introduction

Cash is the most popular form of payment mode for research subject's reimbursement at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) currently. However, the process of handling petty cash float is time-consuming and labor intensive for both Clinical Research Coordinators (CRCs) and Finance staff. In tandem with the Government and Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)'s vision to build a Smart Nation, and to improve efficiency and staff productivity, KK Research Centre (KKRC) invited the research finance team (FIN-AM), Business Office (BO) and Quality Safety & Risk Management (QSRM) to explore the electronic fund transfer method (PAYNOW) to reimburse the research subjects.

Objectives

To reduce administrative work and time spent in handling petty cash for reimbursement to research subjects within 3 months after implementation of new Work Instruction (WI) on 01 Sep 2022.

Methodology

1. QI (Quality Improvement) workgroup formation

Formed a QI workgroup involving relevant departments (BO, Fin-AM, KK Research Centre and QSRM) to explore electronic fund transfer method to replace cash. After several discussions and checking with banks, PAYNOW was identified as a suitable method.

2. Workflow establishment for direct payment from KKH

The QI workgroup discussed and established workflow with 1FSS on using PAYNOW to transfer the payment directly from KKH to research subjects.

3. A Pilot Project conduct

A Pilot Project was conducted to identify potential problems and concerns for using PAYNOW to transfer the payment directly from KKH to research subjects. KKRC chose 1 study that only involves KKH staff as study subjects. Feedback were collected after subjects received their payment. QI workgroup decided this workflow to be unfeasible as it took ≥ 6 weeks for the subjects to receive the payment via PAYNOW.

4. Workflow revision to CRC personal PAYNOW

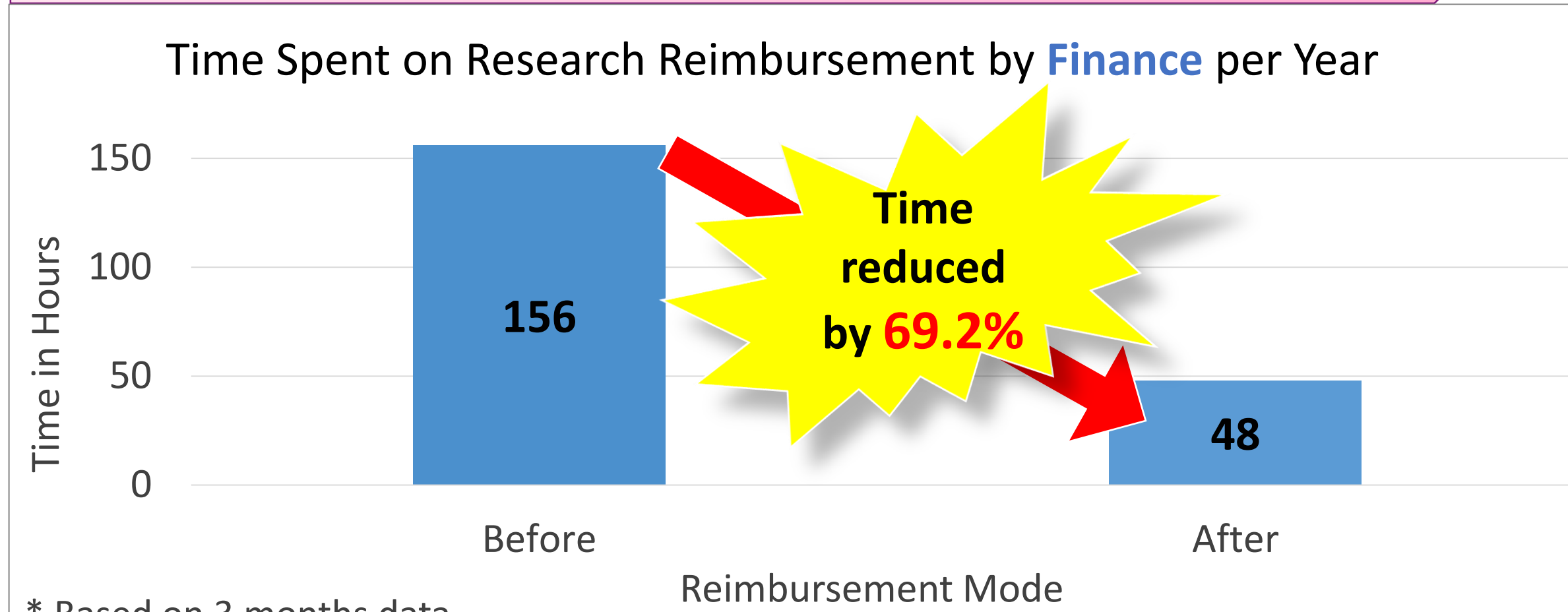
The PAYNOW payment process was revised by QI workgroup. Instead of direct payment from KKH to research subjects, a fix amount of petty cash float would be given to CRCs to use their PAYNOW account to first transfer the payment to research subjects and then claim from Finance.

5. WI implementation on 01 Sep 2022

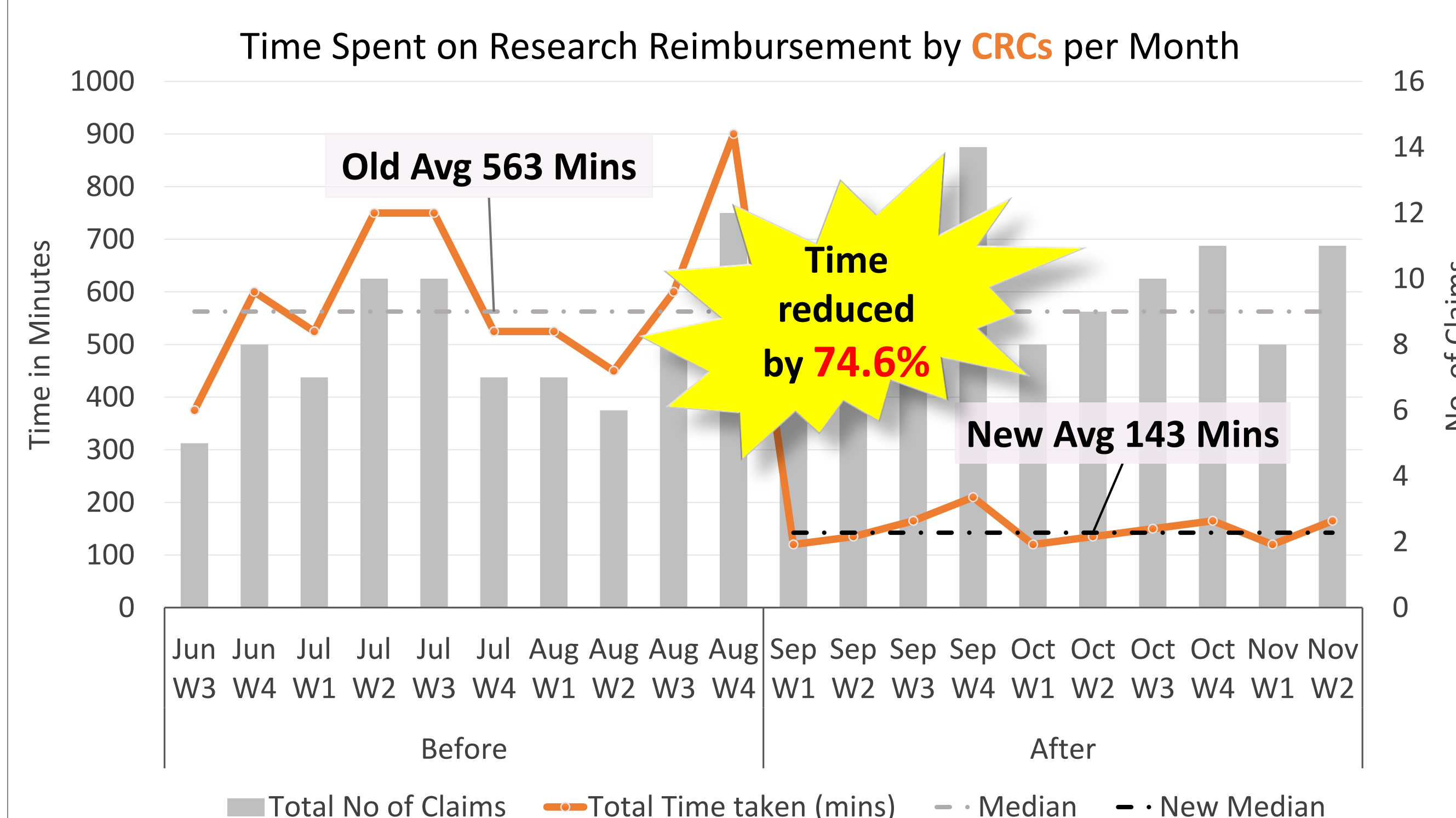
The process of handling petty cash float including the claim back process was revised by QI workgroup. The hospital electronic system, Accounts Payable Invoice Management System (APIMS) would replace the hardcopy petty cash claim form. The WI titled "Handling Petty Cash Float for Transport Reimbursement to Research Subjects" was revised and officially implemented on 01 Sep 2022.

Results

1. Time spent by Finance and CRCs is reduced significantly.

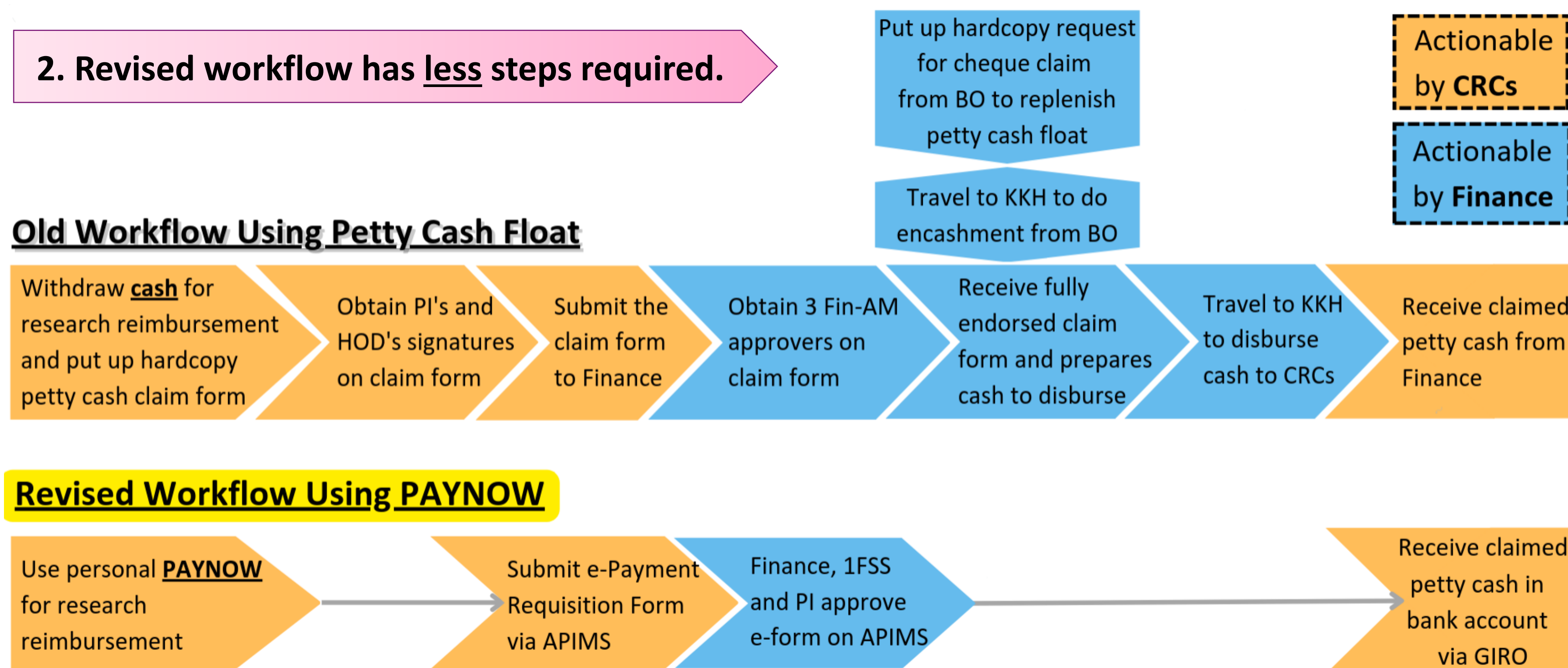


- Initially, Finance spent 156 hrs per year handling research reimbursement in cash.
- Now, Finance only spent 48 hrs per year.
- ✓ Saved 108 hours per year for Finance staff.



- From mid Jun to end Aug 2022, CRCs spent averagely 563 mins per month handling research reimbursement in cash and claim back via hardcopy method.
- Now, CRCs only spent averagely 143 mins per month from Sep to mid Nov 2022.
- ✓ Saved 7 hours per month, 84 hours per year for CRCs.

2. Revised workflow has less steps required.



3. New workflow is developed for off-site studies.

With the transition to employ the use of PAYNOW, in Nov 2022, a new workflow for electronic acknowledgment of receipt of reimbursement by research participants was developed for scenarios or research studies where physical hospital visits are not required.

Other benefits...

4. Reduce the risk of cross infection when handling cash between research subjects and staff.

5. Improve accuracy and reduce human error, such as miscalculations and counting errors when handling cash.

6. Improve safety and security for staff not to hold onto big amount of petty cash across building.

7. Reduce administrative work (obtaining wet-inked signatures for approvals, preparing hardcopy forms) and paper wastage.

Conclusion

With the implementation of digital payment (PAYNOW) to research subjects and the use of APIMS, the time and effort spent on research reimbursement has greatly reduced allowing FIN-AM staff and CRCs to focus better on other value added work. The process converting cash into digital payment for research reimbursement was accelerated as the COVID-19 raised the awareness of the cross-infection risk. During COVID-19 pandemic, many researchers also explored research designs with minimal physical contact with subjects and thereby cut down research subjects' physical visits to hospital. For such scenarios, research subjects can now acknowledge the receipt of reimbursement without wet-inked signatures.

In conclusion, using PAYNOW to replace cash for research reimbursement is effective, it has improved work efficiency and ensures that KKH aligns with the national directives of going cashless.