NON-ATTENDANCE TO THE PAEDIATRIC CLINICS IN A MALAYSIAN TERTIARY HOSPITAL: A SIZEABLE PROBLEM AND IDENTIFICATION OF AN EFFICACIOUS INTERVENTION

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**Objective**: To determine the rate, causes and risk factors of non-attendance to the paediatric clinic in a tertiary hospital in Malaysia and to determine the efficacy of one telephone call to confirm a new appointment.

**Method**: For all non-attending patients during a 2-month period a proforma was filled up based on patients’ records. During a phone call, additional questions were asked and a new appointment was offered.

**Results**: Of 1563 patients who had an appointment, 497 (31.8%) were non-attendees. Weather conditions, the subspecialty and timing (morning or afternoon) had a significant effect on non-attendance. Forgetfulness was the main cause. Only 160 patients could be successfully contacted. Among the contactable patients, 55 already had and 10 had reasons not to get a new appointment. Of the 95 remaining patients, 73 (76.8%) attended the new appointment.

**Conclusion**: The non-attendance rate was high. One telephone call had a reasonable efficacy for the contactable patients but because a high number of patients were not contactable overall effectiveness was poor.