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# Outsourcing of Public Patients in Ministry of Health Hospitals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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1.0 Introduction

- **Outsourcing** is a strategy practiced in the public hospital Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) to **increase the effectiveness of services** and **reduce operating costs.**
- Outsourcing is defined as a **process of externalizing tasks and services performed in-house to outside vendors.**
- Medical Development Division decided to outsource certain medical services to **reduce the waiting time, overcome backlog cases** and **improve service delivery** which was affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The objective of this study is to **evaluate the effectiveness of outsourcing** in **reducing the number of backlog cases** in **MOH hospitals** in response to **COVID-19** in the year **2021.**

2.0 Materials and Methods
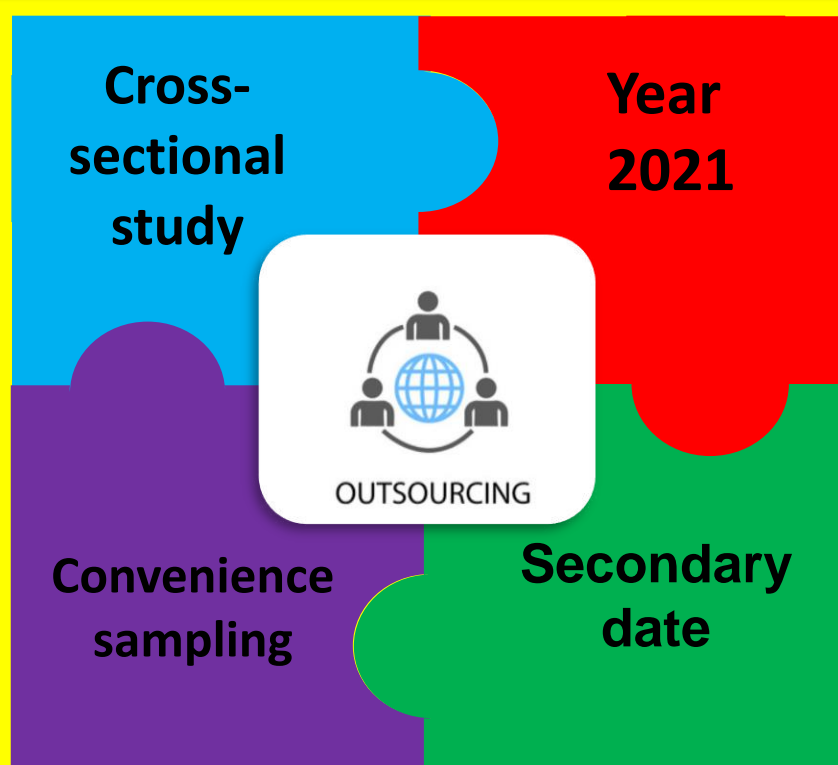
- The selection of cases from MOH hospitals that need to be outsourced was based on the concept:
  high volume, low risk, and elective cases.
- **Inclusion cases** were elective cases namely surgical procedures, and investigations like CT scans, MRI
- **Exclusion cases** were complicated surgical procedures that might need intensive care unit support, multidisciplinary approach care, or unplanned emergency cases.
- This whole outsourcing process used **special funding** from the Ministry of Finance (MOF) called **Kumpulan Wang Covid (KWC)** and **Akaun Amanah Bencana (AAB)** which are specially allocated to MOH during this pandemic.
- **Obligated t**o the government **finance protocol.**

3.0 Results

- In total, there were **20,772 cases** were **outsourced** to private.
  - 11,684(56.2%) were surgical-based.
  - 9,088(43.8%) non-surgical.
- It involved:
  - ✓ **14 State Health Departments**
  - ✓ **49 MOH public hospitals**
  - ✓ **113 private hospitals.**
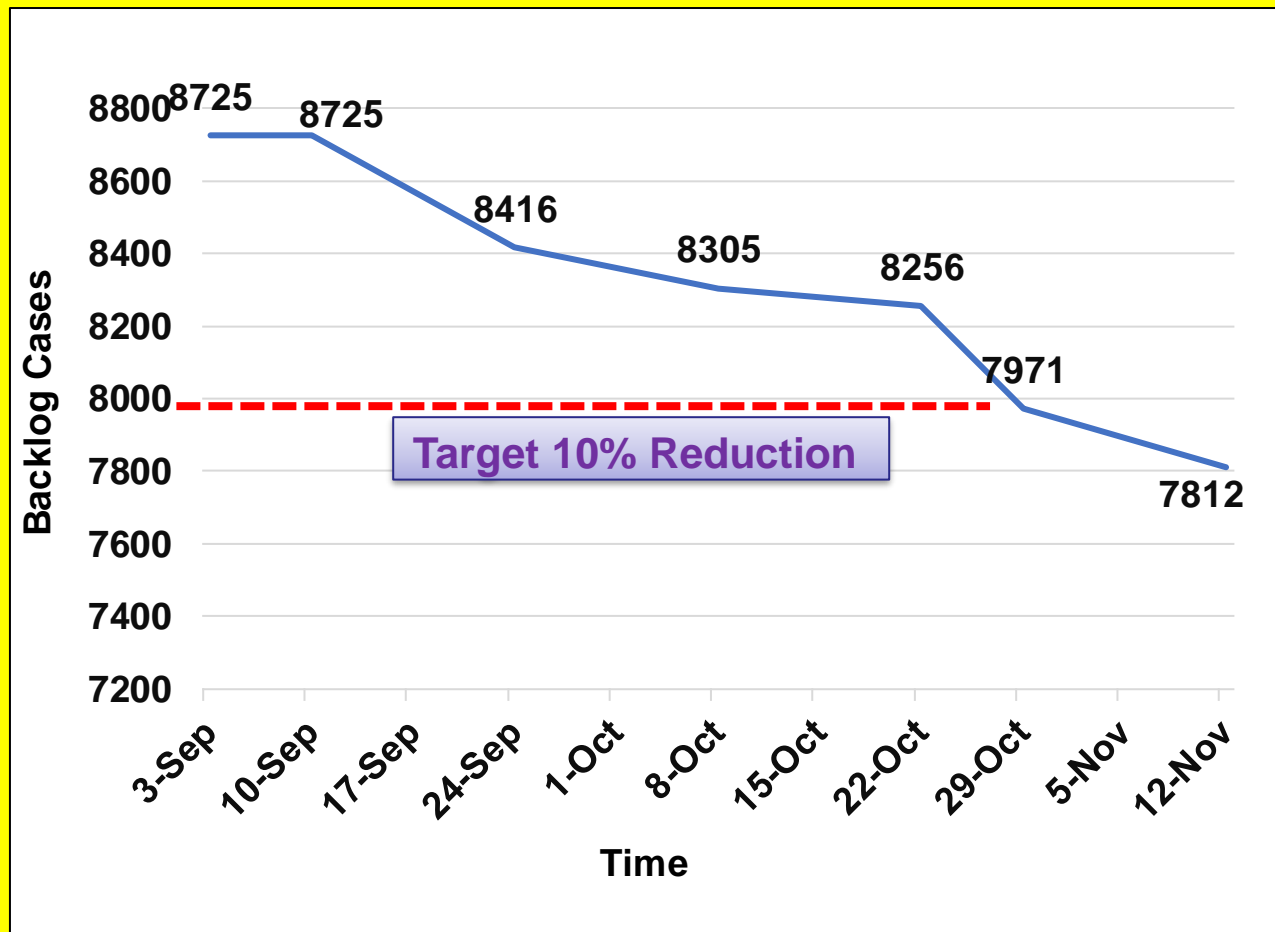- The total **expenditure** for this outsourcing practice was **RM 174,299,895.98.**

Figure 1: Backlog Cases Reduction Trending Through Outsourcing in Malaysia Public Hospitals Year 2021

4.0 Discussion

- There was a **reduction** of **11.7%** in **backlog cases.**
- Reduction from **8725 patients** in **Sept 2021** to 7812 in **Nov 2021.**
- The achievement **surpassed the initial target** set which is a **10% reduction** in backlog cases in MOH hospitals.
- Many cases were unable to outsource because of the **limitation** of **private facilities' services** and the limited **budget allocation** which is a **disabling factor.**

5.0 Conclusion

- **Public hospitals of MOH** have **benefited** from the outsourcing practice.
- It **meets the objective** as successfully reduced the backlog cases and improves the waiting time of patients.
- **Surgical-based patients** have **benefited more** compared to non-surgical.
- Overall, **patients were satisfied** with outsourcing as it fills the gaps in public hospital services which were overstretched in managing the pandemic.
- **Outsourcing** is seen as one of the **strategies to respond to the COVID-19 emergency**
- Limitations are dependent on the budget allocated.
- Future studies should undertake a cost-effectiveness analysis of outsourcing public cases to private facilities.

6.0 Acknowledgements