












Tips and Tools for Learning Improvement

Answer Key | Flowcharts

Exercise 1. Practice using symbols

A. Flowchart of how to make a cup of tea

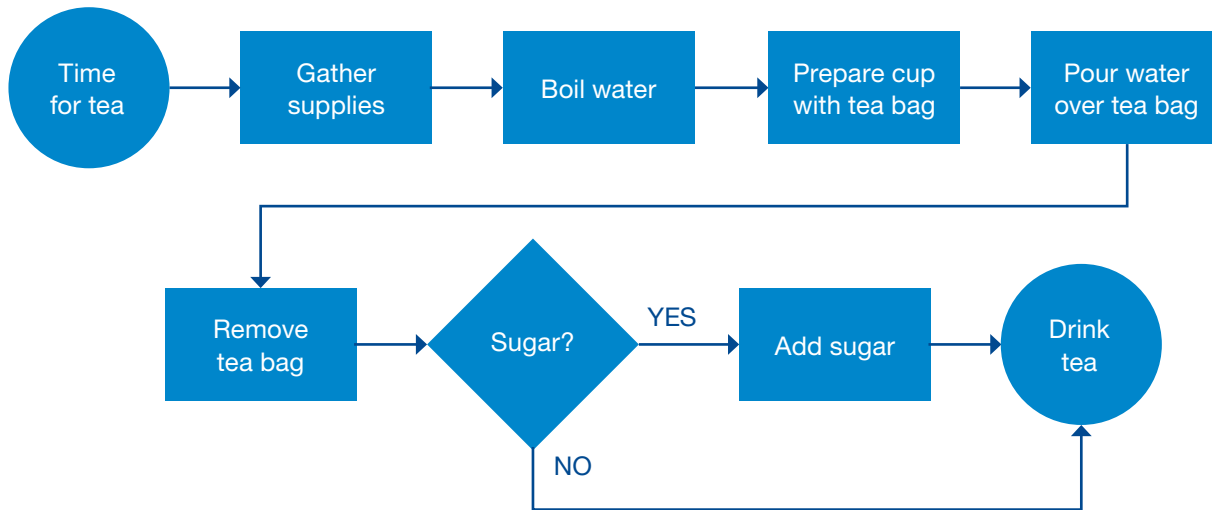
Time for tea	
Gather supplies (heat source, water, pot, tea bag, cup spoon, sugar)	
Boil water	
Prepare cup with tea bag	
Pour boiling water over tea bag	
Remove tea bag	
Want sugar?	

Add sugar	
Drink tea	

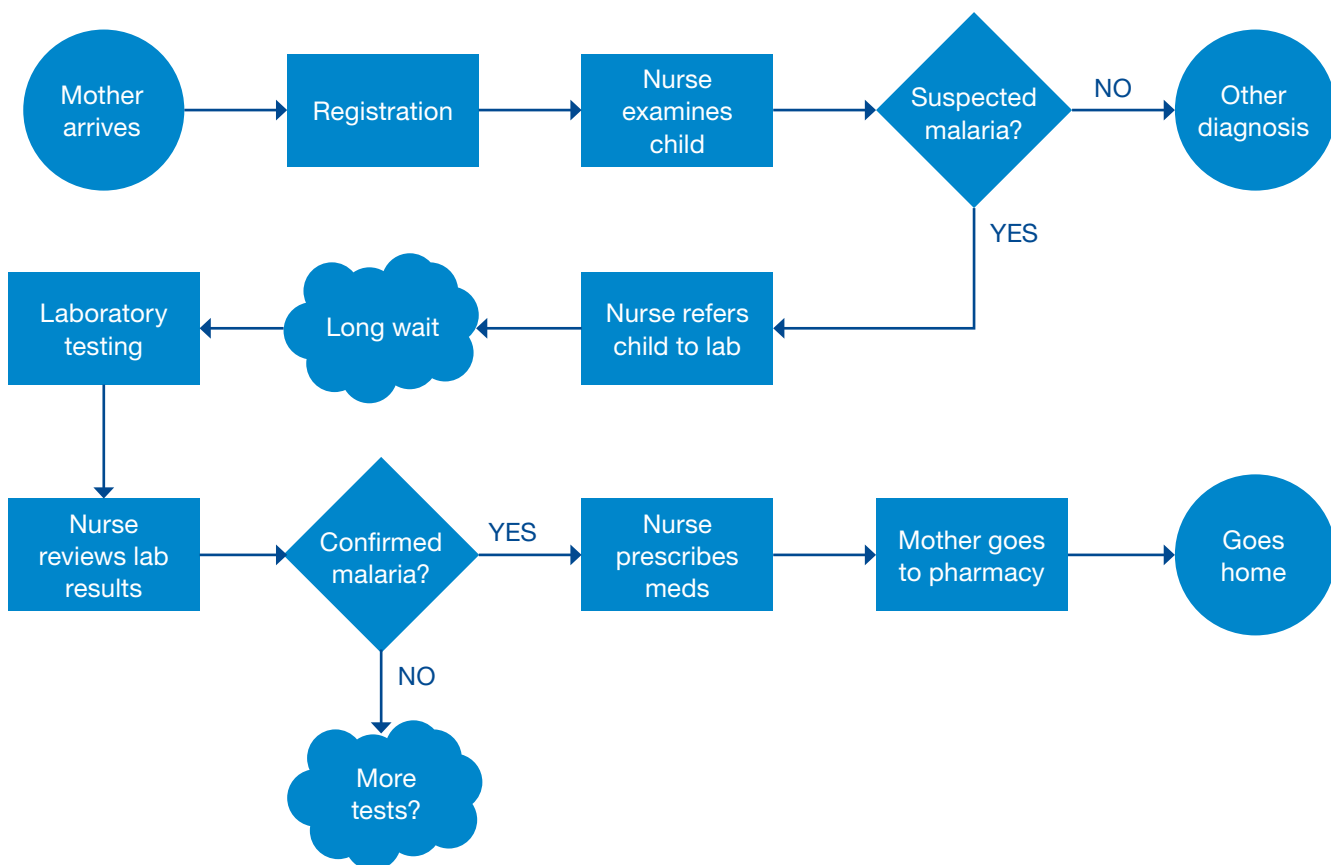
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B. Flowchart of how to make a cup of tea



Exercise 2. Turning a description of a process into a flowchart



Exercise 3. Interpreting a flowchart

Statements about flowchart	True	False
This flowchart shows the information flow between the nurse and the CHW.	X	
This flowchart shows what happens if the patient doesn't return to care after the reminder call.		X
This flowchart shows how the CHW addresses the patient's needs.		X
This flowchart shows the process for reminding patients about appointments.	X	
This flowchart shows how lost to follow-up patients are returned to the clinic.		X
This flowchart shows whether there are any unclear steps, problems or bottlenecks in this process.		X
This flowchart has enough information to understand problems in the process and develop changes to improve the process.		X
This flowchart would better address the aim if it included more information about what happens after the reminder phone call is made.	X	

Exercise 4. Analyzing a flowchart

Note: These answers may not be the only possible answers, but will give you some ideas to think about.

1. Do you see any areas where the staff are doing double work?
 - Woman counseled twice on same FP information
2. Do you see areas where there is opportunity for more efficiency?
 - Reduce counseling burden
 - Eliminate need for patient to go to pharmacy
3. What parts of the process might patients be unhappy with?
 - Long waits
 - Counseling twice wastes patient's time
 - Sending patient to the pharmacy
4. What steps or clouds might need to have their own flowchart to understand the process within that step or further areas for root cause analysis?
 - Supply chain for family planning supplies
 - Referral system for family planning methods not provided at this clinic

5. Which problem would you start with and why? Several possible options might include:

- Long waits – This may be a good place to start as it is a straightforward problem for a new team. Reducing wait times can often be done quickly and motivate new teams.
- Duplicate counseling – Finding a way to reduce double work will free up time of the nurse or counselor to be doing other work. This will be motivational for staff as they feel that they are using their time more efficiently. Patients will be happy to not get information twice (unless they request it).
- Trip to the pharmacy – The team can try to eliminate the need for the patient to spend time going to the pharmacy and waiting a second time for the provider. This will be more efficient use of time for the patient and make them more satisfied with their care. You may also have some patient attrition if women decide not to spend the time going to the pharmacy and coming back.
- Stock outs of key pharmaceuticals – For a more advanced team, they may choose to tackle this problem first. This will help reduce their percent of unmet need for family planning by ensuring that women who want a method are able to get it in a timely manner at one visit. Dealing with supply chain may involve actors and processes outside of the facility, so this may not be a good choice as a first area for improvement for a new team.