

## Outpatient Appointment Scheduling: The Disconnect Between Research and Practice



Emre Veral

Baruch College, NP Loomba Department of Management, NYC, NY10010, USA

### *Abstract*

Our research is motivated by the observation that appointment scheduling in outpatient settings has seen an increasing and extraordinary level of interest from the academic community, while their findings have not attracted much interest from the practitioner community. We explore this phenomenon through a series simulation experiments designed to assess the potential of operational, revenue-related, and patient-related benefits that may be realized through improved scheduling practices. We design a simulated operational environment, i.e. patient profiles, consultation time characteristics, and no-show behaviour based on actual data reported by clinics and hospitals nationwide in the US. Then, we measure the expected outcomes in terms of provider productivity and patient waiting times by applying various appointment scheduling templates, used in actual practices and those advocated by academic research findings. Our results show that potential benefits fail to make a strong enough business case for adopting complex scheduling systems. IT integration difficulties, centralized processes and staff buy-in exacerbate misgivings for adoption. We conclude that efforts directed towards reducing missed appointments by patients, and improved accuracy in estimating and predicting providers' consultation times have a much higher potential for improving clinic operations and patient satisfaction, by adopting user-friendly and simple-to-implement scheduling rules already used by practitioners.

### *Speaker Biography*

Professor Veral is the Chair of the Management Department at Baruch College, CUNY. His primary research interest focuses on healthcare operations and outpatient services. Prior to his current responsibilities, he served as the Academic Director of Baruch's Executive Healthcare MBA program during 2013–2019. Professor Veral's current research agenda is in the area of outpatient appointment scheduling to improve provider productivity, clinic revenue, and patient satisfaction.

### *Website*

[9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Hospital Management and Healthcare.](#)

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