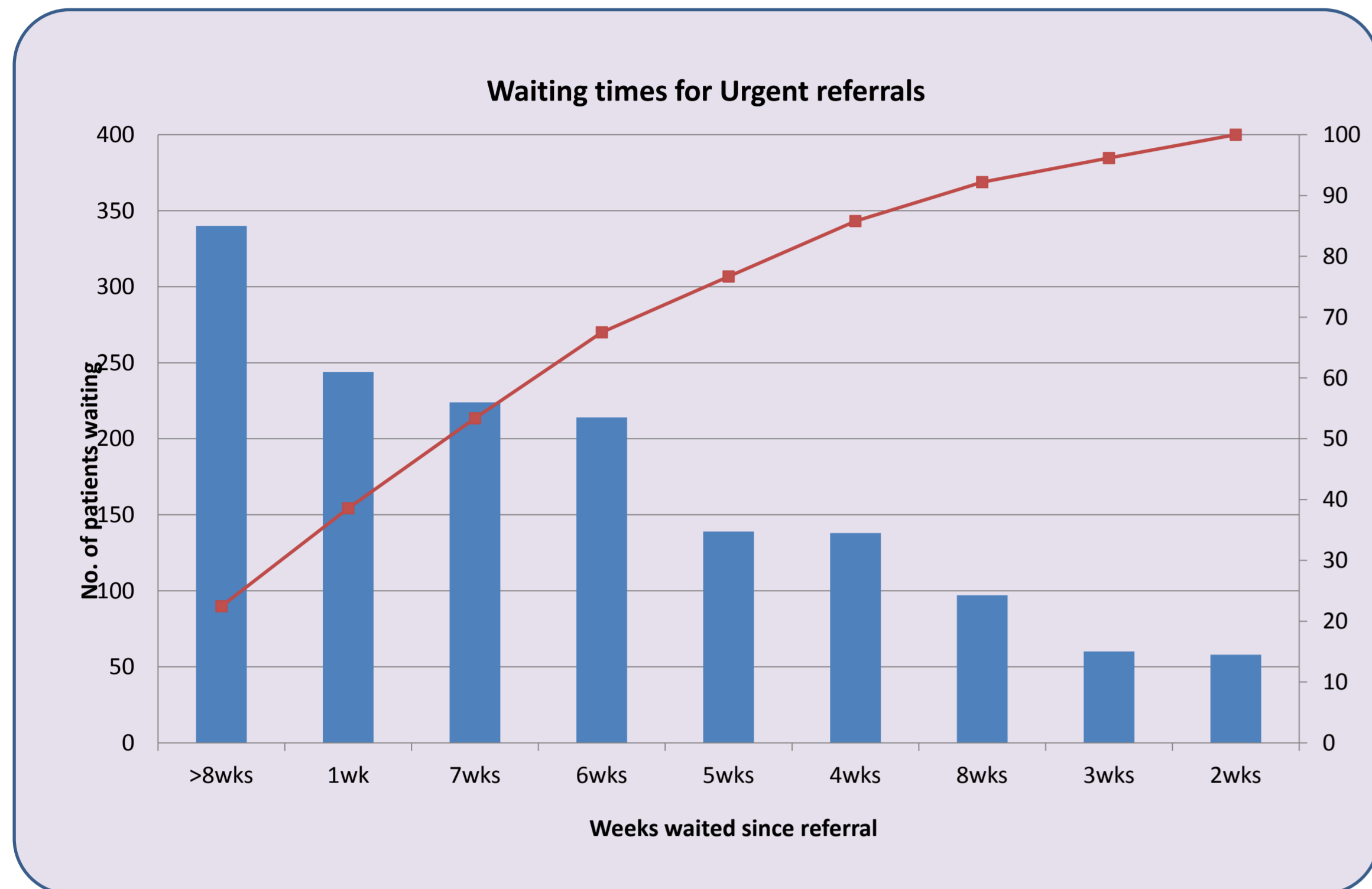


Reducing waiting times for Urgent Rheumatology New patient referrals

Dr Hema G Bhat, Consultant Rheumatologist

Background

There has been a significant rise in Rheumatology referrals over the years leading to long waiting times for New patient appointments with 67% of urgent referrals waiting over 4 weeks to be seen by a Rheumatologist.



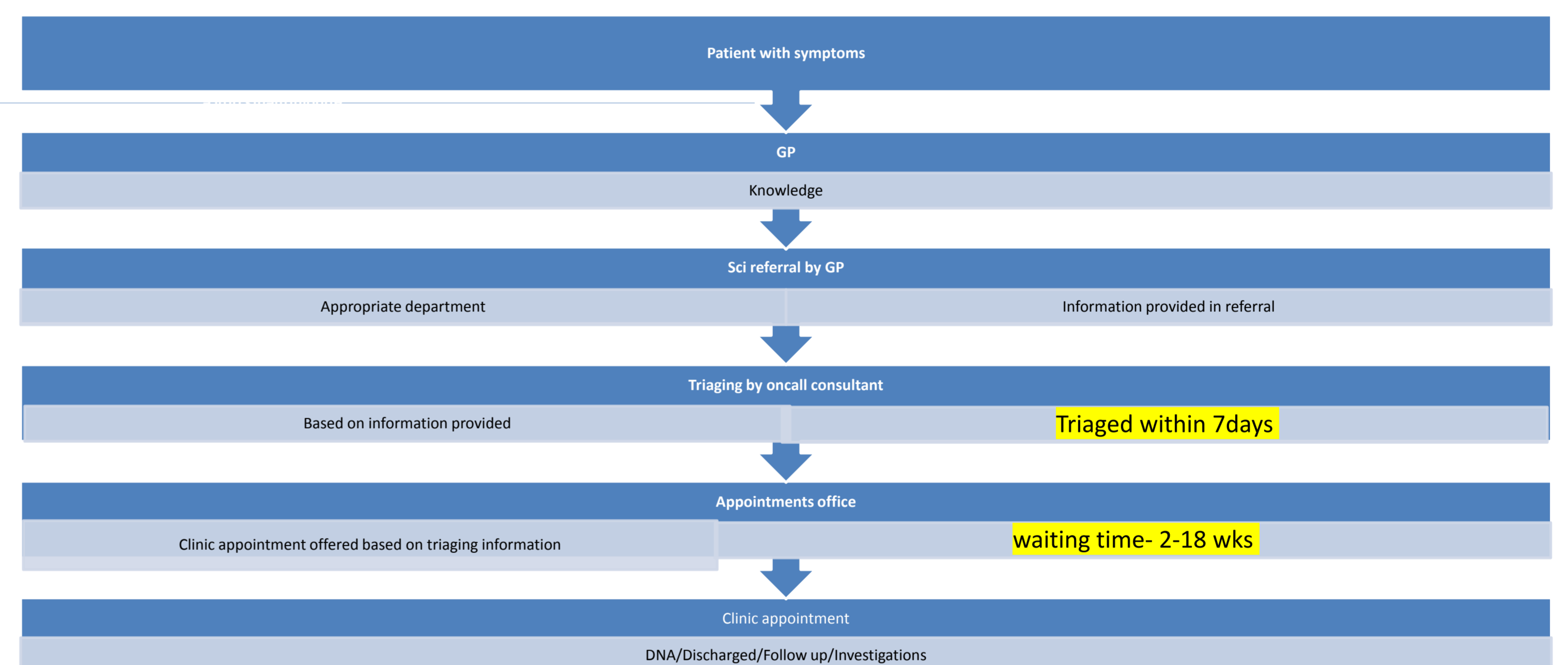
Aim

To insure that 50% of the New Urgent rheumatology referrals are seen within 4 weeks of referral by May 2019.

Tools

- Process map
- Pareto Charts
- Discussion with colleagues

Process map

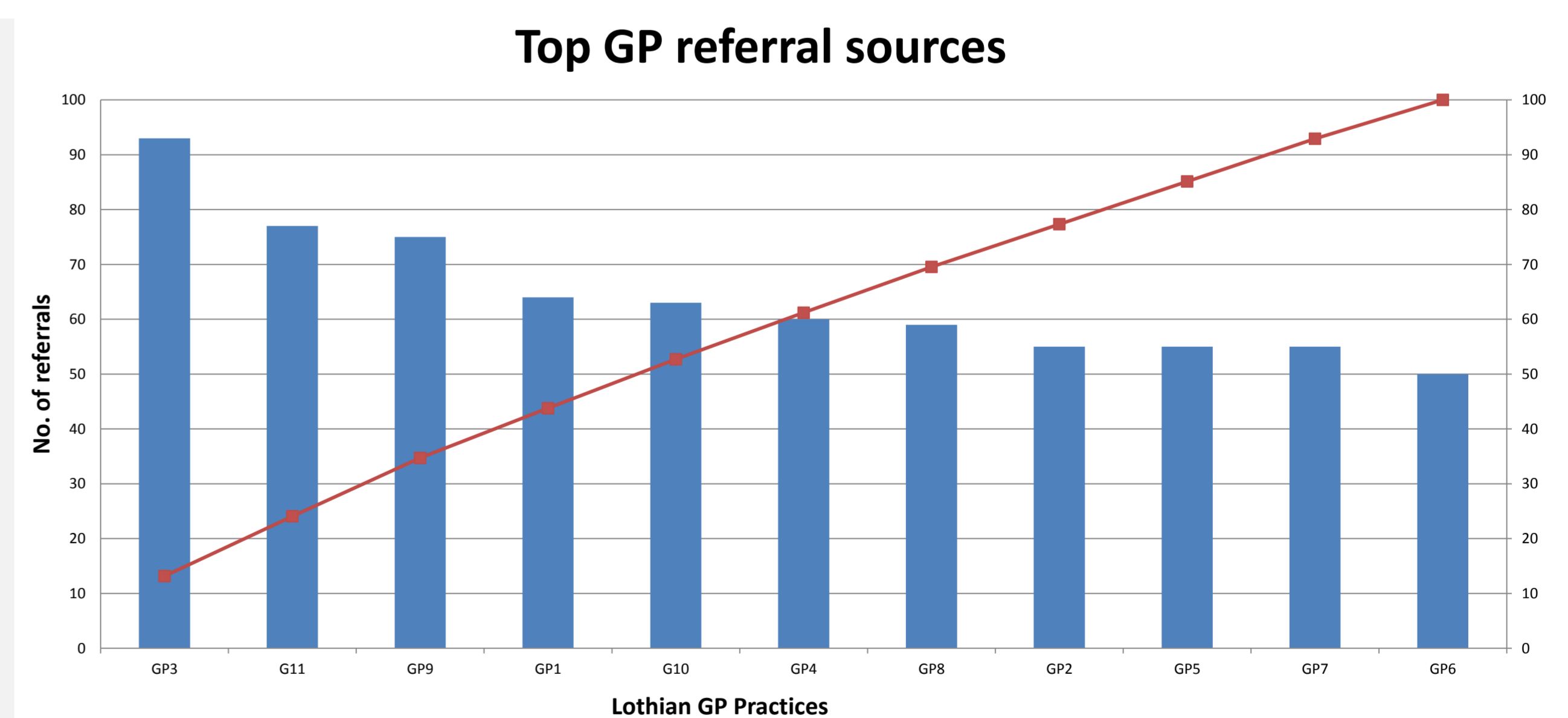


Problems

- Inadequate information on referral
- Increased routine referrals taking up appointment slots
- Staffing levels

Intervention

- Discussion with GP practices to address the problems
- Education
- Review referral guidance/ RefHelp and Sci referral forms



Personal reflection/lessons learnt

- Speaking to colleagues involved at various levels of the process map was very informative. It emphasised the need for better communication at every level.
- Assessing and managing 'demand' should be a priority in every department.