

**CoRIPS Research Award 025 – partial funding of  
£6,875.00 (£9,240.00 requested)**

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**Experiences of neophyte therapy radiographers in extended roles**

Abstract

The National Radiotherapy Advisory Group report (2007) and the Cancer reform Strategy (2007) acknowledge that 80% of radiotherapy work is routine and could be managed by radiographers in extended roles. The positive impact on waiting times could be immense, and a recent professional body survey shows that numbers of extended role practitioners are gradually increasing, with many departments making strategic plans to increase numbers over the coming years (Society and College of Radiographers 2008). Currently we know little about the efficacy of the roles or the individual's experiences in these roles. Research into extended role practice for therapy radiographers is limited and there is a clear gap in knowledge, which needs addressing if 80% of practice is to be managed by extended role practitioners.

This qualitative study will explore the experiences of therapy radiographers who have been working in extended roles for up to 2 years, to gain an understanding of their professional development. Open interviews will be used to explore their perceptions and experiences. This greater understanding and knowledge will inform the development of a substantive theory that explicates the stages and processes of extended role practice and professional development

It is anticipated that the findings from this study will be timely for individuals moving into extended roles, and practice managers and service commissioners who will recruit and deploy staff in the strategic growth. The information potentially will be valuable to the professional body, and academic institutions who may want to develop policies and educational strategies to augment the successful implementation of these roles.

Method

A constructivist grounded theory approach will be used for this study. A sample of therapy radiographers who have been working in extended roles, for up to two years will be selected from the population of therapy radiographers working in the United Kingdom. The sample will be inclusive of all scopes of practice such as patient assessment and review, imaging and community liaison radiographers.

Theoretical sampling within the two year time spectrum will permit the diversity of experiences as a "neophytes" to be explored. For example, individuals who are new to role extension (and possibly still in a one year "training" post), as well as individuals who will have had up to one year post competency accreditation, during which time they will have consolidated their practice. This will enable a range and diversity of professional development stages to be explored. Sampling a range of roles will allow any differences related to scope of practice and different working environments to be explored. It is anticipated that the information gathered may inform subsequent theoretical sampling.

Participation will be voluntary and recruitment will be facilitated by asking if the researcher can advertise on the Society and College of Radiographers web site and place a written piece in synergy. The project will be outlined, and individuals

asked to contact the researcher to volunteer. They will be asked to briefly outline their scope of practice and their length of time in post, so this information can be used to inform sampling.

Data Collection will be by face to face interviews and data will be analysed through conceptual coding (Charmaz 2006, Schreiber and Stern 2001, Strauss and Corbin 1998). By coding data and comparing the codes with the data, categories and properties will emerge, and the raw data will be transformed into theory. This is an iterative process, and will broadly be in the following stages:

1. Initial coding
2. Focussed coding, (also referred to as open coding)
3. Axial coding
4. Selective coding.
5. Constant comparison will be used throughout the process of 1-4 to enable the identification of any "variations of patterns in the data" ( Strauss and Corbin 1998 p 67)

## **References:**

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SCHREIBER and STERN (2001) *Using Grounded Theory in Nursing*. Springer Publishing Company.

STRAUSS and CORBIN (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research. Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. SAGE publications