

Laura Pattinson: Therapeutic Radiographers' perceptions of the barriers and enablers to effective smoking cessation support. Funding amount £6770.42

Background

The drive for AHP involvement in PH is a current priority of PHE (identified as a priority area under the 2015-2016 Building the Capacity and Capability of the public health system programme of work¹). As a result of the initiative to expand the public health workforce, the Allied Health Professionals Federation in collaboration with PHE devised a strategy² to build the capacity, impact and profile of AHPs in public health 2015-2018. Within the strategy a key aim is to equip AHPs with the skills, knowledge and initiatives to promote the health and wellbeing of individuals. The project therefore supports the national initiatives focused on AHPs in PH.

Therapeutic radiographers have the opportunity to build therapeutic relationships with patients during a course of radiotherapy treatment and it is reported that the general public trust advice surrounding healthy conversations from the AHPs⁶. It is reported that smoking cessation can reduce treatment associated toxicity and mortality, therefore the topic of smoking cessation is highly relevant to radiotherapy practice^{3,4,5}.

Primary research question & secondary research questions

What are therapeutic radiographers' perceptions of the barriers and enablers in providing support or referring to smoking cessation support?

- What do service users identify as important components of a training package for therapy radiographers to provide brief smoking cessation interventions?
- What do therapy radiographers identify as important components of a training package for therapy radiographers to provide brief smoking cessation interventions?

Outcomes

- To gain depth of understanding of the barriers and facilitators to smoking cessation brief interventions
- Development of a training resource to overcome some barriers to provision (this could be used more widely in radiotherapy practice if effective and potential wider use across AHPs)
- Assessment of the use of the training package to assess suitability of use

Methodology and analysis

The research methodology for the focus groups will be a qualitative design; this is a suitable methodology when considering the epistemological approach of interpretivism. This research design allows the participants in the study to describe their experiences and to analyse how individuals understand their own experiences. Focus groups are a suitable method for this project as they can be used to examine not only what the participants are thinking but to examine how they think and why they think that way, their understanding and priorities⁶. Initially 4 radiotherapy departments will be recruited for the study. Purposive sampling using the national audit of NICE guidance compliance⁷ (PH48) will be used to inform selection. Once departments are identified a maximum of 10 clinical staff will be invited (Appendix B invite to participate) to each focus group, this will ensure focus groups still viable with last minute cancellations.

With participant permission, each focus group will be recorded and transcribed and imported into the QSR international data analysis software Nvivo for data analysis. Data analysis will be conducted using the framework approach. This approach is a recognised method of thematic analysis. Two researchers will review and code the data, discuss themes and clarify the coding framework, themes, subordinate themes and supporting extracts. Participants will be given the opportunity to review transcripts, themes and interpretations, and make additions or corrections which will ensure the accuracy of the information and protect against potential misinterpretations and researcher subjectivity⁸. In addition to the focus groups a questionnaire will be used to consider if the use of the training resource is effective to support radiographers to deliver brief smoking cessation interventions. This will be achieved using a likert scale questionnaire - sampling the participants at 2 stages; firstly prior to the focus group and secondly following the use of the training resource. The results of the questionnaire will be analysed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The project will also involve the completion of a systematic review to identify smoking cessation tools and interventions in oncology. The review will be completed by a student intern.

Impact

In the first instance the project has scope to identify the barriers and facilitators to effective smoking cessation interventions and to develop a training package based on the in depth knowledge and understanding gained from the focus group data. The use of the training tool will be designed to support implementation and therefore contributes to CPD and knowledge gain for some clinical staff. The impact on service users from this project has potential to be significant. Through the use of a brief intervention and referral pathways patients will have access to information and support to encourage smoking cessation - ultimately impacting on clinical outcomes through reduced toxicity, improved quality of life and reduced risk of development of further cancer and additional chronic diseases. The impact of the study will initially be focused on the departments participating in the focus groups; however there is scope to disseminate across UK radiotherapy practice. In addition to radiotherapy with some subject specific adaptation it might be appropriate for the training tool to be implemented across the AHP workforce.

References

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