

CoRIPS Research Award 080

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Implementation of Advanced and Extended Scope Practice in Diagnostic Radiography : The Scottish Perspective 2012

Awarded £9204.00

Lay Summary

Health care imperatives in Scotland generally align with the rest of the UK in terms of demographic change and the challenges of cost effectiveness in a resource constrained system, nevertheless health policy in Scotland is devolved from that of the rest of the UK. The structures for health care delivery differ significantly and the professional culture follows a more traditional model. There is evidence that this has constrained the evolution of skill mix and extended scope roles for non-medical health professionals generally, particularly radiographers. There is a concern that aspects of the system may be constraining the development of radiographer roles in a manner which belies the existing evidence base and compromises the delivery of benefits to the service generally, and patients in particular.

This project seeks to establish the current state of play of radiographer advanced and extended scope practice in Scotland, including the establishment of new roles, regarded as emerging mainstream activity. Project activity will involve communication with a range of stakeholders within the Scottish radiology community, seeking information that will enable establishment of a profile of radiographic practice in Scotland. This will provide an overview of the radiology service, demonstrating variations across a variety of demographic locations; identify the drivers and constraints in professional, fiscal and cultural terms, and allow comparison with developments in England.

The outcomes will serve as a valuable addition to the limited existing evidence in this area and provide a resource to inform or affirm health policy development in Scotland.

Principal aim of the study

This study aims to provide evidence of the nature and implementation of diagnostic radiographer extended scope or advanced practice roles throughout Scotland. The project outcomes and conclusions, will enable strategic leaders and service managers to target areas for operational or workforce development in order to support the implementation of existing health policy relating to the provision of diagnostic services, including the 4 tier career structure. In particular, it is anticipated that the development of a 'whole Scotland' perspective will assist in the identification and dismantling of pinch points and barriers to the development of diagnostic imaging services for the benefit of patients.

Primary research question

With regard to the delivery of diagnostic imaging services across the geographical spread of Scotland, what is the profile of advanced or extended scope practice in diagnostic radiography? The question will be directed to service managers and lead practitioners across Scotland's 14 Health Boards who are responsible for service delivery and development.

Secondary research questions

Overview

- What is the range of advanced or extended scope practice undertaken, and the proportion of the radiographic workforce involved?

- From a practical or attitudinal perspective, how do practitioners see their own involvement in the development of advanced or extended scope practice?
- How do geographical or demographic features influence the implementation of advanced or extended scope practice, e.g. differences in practice between remote and rural locations and urban areas? What education and training opportunities have been used to develop the workforce for advanced or extended scope practice?

Service

- How do radiography managers view the strategic or practical importance of implementing advanced or extended scope roles?
- Where advanced or extended scope practice is undertaken, how are trained practitioners deployed in this respect, e.g. time spent carrying out these duties per week?
- How are advanced or extended scope practice roles defined under terms and conditions of employment, i.e. how do employers recognise/reward these roles?
- Do barriers exist to the implementation of advanced or extended scope practice? To include consideration of training and finance elements.
- Are there trained practitioners not undertaking advanced or extended scope roles, or have such roles] been withdrawn? If so, why?
- Does evidence exist of defined service impacts resulting from the implementation of advanced or extended scope roles?

Outcomes

The outcomes of this study are intended to inform the profession and the wider health community, of the current position regarding the application of advanced and evolving practices in diagnostic imaging in Scotland, in the context of existing strategic health policy.

The following specific outcomes will be achieved:

- Provide current, comprehensive and hitherto unknown evidence regarding the profile of diagnostic radiographer advanced or extended scope practice in Scotland. This data will provide information of UK wide interest.
- Establish a resource to inform policy] and NHS managers involved in strategic planning at local and national relating to imaging services both in urban and rural hospitals.
- Inform the development of education strategy to underpin the implementation of existing and projected government policies.
- Provide an enhanced understanding of the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of advanced or extended scope practice.
- Identify whether the remote and rural healthcare agenda influences the development of advanced or extended scope practice in diagnostic imaging.
- Develop the research leadership skills of the Principal Investigator and enhance the research skills of the research team.