

# Understanding the Humanistic Interaction with Medical Imaging Technology

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study set out to discover the nature of the interactions that occur between the radiographer, patient and high technology imaging equipment. The investigation focussed upon two radiology departments where patients had just experienced either a CT or MR scan. No attempt was made to generalise the findings since it was the existence of the phenomena, rather than the frequency of events elsewhere, that was under scrutiny.

A thorough literature review revealed a distinct lack of previous research in this area with only quantitative methodological approaches having been employed. This study was a purely inductive qualitative investigation that sought to explore feelings, meanings and roles with the context of the imaging departments.

A thematic content analysis of fifty semi-structured patient interviews revealed a varying degree of satisfaction, fear and misunderstanding. These data were complemented with eight interviews of self selecting radiographers who had experienced a CT or MR scan, and eight interviews of radiographers who predominately worked in these high technology areas.

Following data analysis, specific typologies were derived from the concepts to formulate a model of the humanistic interaction with medical imaging technology. Discussion of the findings related to the technological and humanistic literature and the alternative micro-sociological perspectives of Symbolic Interactionism and Critical Dramaturgy gave a more creative explanation of the unique theory. The behaviour exhibited in MR met with Ervin Goffman's definition of a total institution with many of the concepts of front and back stage performance being clearly identified.

The final section of the discussion considered the potential for future research and a reflexive analysis of the study. In conclusion, the model is considered to be a valid conceptual representation of the interactions within the context of the naturalistic setting. The theory developed provides enlightening insights with respects to roles and rituals performed in the radiology department.