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Grant ID: 038



# College of Radiographers Industry Partnership Research Awards Final Report

<b>1. Principal Investigator</b>	Daniel Hutton
<b>2. Project Title</b>	Investigating the Factors that influence Job Satisfaction for Band 5 and 6 Therapy Radiographers
<b>3. Amount of Award</b>	£2,120.10
<b>4. Did you spend the money as indicated in your proposal (if not why)?</b>	
Yes.	
<b>5. Did you reach your intended project outcomes (if not why)?</b>	
Yes.	
<b>6. What are your significant findings?</b>	
Analysis of the transcripts from the four focus groups yielded five key themes; professional development, organisational governance, transition, workload and team. Of these, professional development and organisation governance were the most prominent.	
<b>7. Have you submitted the work for publication (if so where)?</b>	
Oral Presentation – SoR Radiotherapy Weekend, Birmingham, Jan ‘11 Oral Presentation – Radiotherapy Manager’s Meeting, Cheltenham, Apr ‘11 Poster Presentation – UKRO, Manchester, Apr ‘11 Oral Presentation – ESTRO, London, May ‘11  Article to be submitted to Radiography for consideration. (Draft version attached).	
<b>8. Please provide an executive summary of your work (two sides of A4 maximum) N.B. If you already have a draft or final version of the proposed publication can you please attach.</b>	
<p><b><u>Introduction:</u></b> Retaining and developing an adequately resourced, qualified and committed workforce is a prerequisite to a well-functioning organisation. Staff shortages in radiotherapy has been a historic problem with the greatest retention challenge that of junior professionals. Recruitment and retention of radiography staff in the NHS is an important yet largely neglected research domain. The importance of recruitment and development will increase in significance with more challenging targets and increasing cancer incidence.</p> <p><b><u>Objectives:</u></b> Obtain a detailed understanding of the experiences of Therapy Radiographers from graduation to first senior / supervisory position.</p> <p>Identify factors influencing perceptions of job satisfaction.</p> <p>Support the development of strategies to increase the level of job satisfaction for this group of practitioners.</p> <p>Inform a phase II study comprising a national questionnaire.</p>	

**Method:**

A qualitative study was undertaken employing a case study approach to explore the professional experience of therapy radiographers in two large departments in the North of England. Four focus groups established comprising 34 participants. The age range of the participants was 22 -42 years, with years qualified ranging from <1 to 19 years. Thematic analysis was employed to identify emergent categories and themes. These categories informed the development of a thematic framework, facilitating comparisons and identifying areas for development and influence.

**Results:**

Job satisfaction is multifaceted and is dependant on the individual, context of work and the environment. The participants identified diverse but interlinking facets that influence satisfaction in their role. Key themes include; professional development, organisation, support through transition and control and autonomy.

“I’m going backwards rather than forwards here. I don’t feel as intelligent as when I was a student”.

“It would be nice to take that care on but I suppose it’s a time issue”.

“You’ve got to tell quite often 25 patients that you’re running an hour behind and it’s quite demoralising for you personally”.

**Conclusion & Recommendations:**

The findings are concordant with therapy radiographer job satisfaction literature, other allied health professionals and the wider literature relating to job satisfaction.

Enhanced insight into the professional experience of therapy radiographers is valuable to inform retention and development strategies of this essential workforce demographic. Only with a satisfied and committed radiographer workforce will the profession meet the challenging objectives of efficiency, effectiveness and patient centred care.

This work outlines measures such as Professional Development Reviews, systems of working, patient bookings to improve job satisfaction and facilitate development and ultimately organisational performance.

It is reassuring that the significant factors impacting therapy radiographers job satisfaction can be positively influenced by managers and organisations. Despite the current climate resources need to be invested to ensure professionals’ self-esteem and actualisation requirements are fulfilled. This objective would be facilitated by structured preceptorship programmes and action planning, incorporating planned rotations contained in a quality PDR system. This approach is additionally attractive at a time when financial restraints require organisations to be creative in how they support and develop their practitioners.

A delicate balance exists between creating efficient and effective systems of work and impacting on a professionals practice and autonomy. Centralised bookings, site specific machines and specialist roles may inadvertently reduce the control, scope of practice and consequently job satisfaction of junior radiographers. It is important that practitioners’ wants and desires are considered when designing systems of work. Where possible radiographers should be allowed to practice autonomously within a protocol controlled environment.

The work team members have a great responsibility to each other and can directly influence their own and others job satisfaction. Effective teams act as a buffer to potential negative influences such as high workload and associated stress.

An effective system of personal and professional development reviews is the foundation upon which most of these improvements can be implemented and sustained. PDRs are critical in managing individual expectations whilst aligning individual goals with departmental and organisational targets. This work has informed the development of a project to implement a formalised preceptorship and mentorship programme at the authors’ trust.

A phase II study comprising a national questionnaire of therapy radiographers would be valuable to test the external validity of the pertinent themes identified. This work would further support the development of a national strategy to better support and develop all therapy radiographers.