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Radiographer's working history is created today

Radiographer's work is varying and full of possibilities. There are many prospects to develop yourself professionally. As radiographers we combine technical expertise with patient care. Increasing the knowledge of this special field of health care among applicants is important, because the history of our future is created today and new experts are continuously needed to study in this field. These aspects were underlined in our project of making radiographer's work familiar among high school sophomores.

As a part of the Project working course we visited Oulun Lyseo high school where we held an oral presentation on radiographer's work and its possibilities now and in the future. The main goal of our presentation was to get the students interested in radiography and radiation therapy studies and to apply for them. During the Project working course we practiced how to plan, execute and evaluate a project in order to develop our project working skills, since project working skills are a crucial part of contemporary working life and increasing interprofessional collaboration.

The main aspects of a radiographer's work

The field of radiography and radiation therapy is quickly developing. The field contains radiation therapy which is used to treat patients and multiple different diagnostic radiological examinations. About 50 % of cancer patients are treated with radiation therapy to shrink the tumors or to decrease symptoms (Johansson 2015). Radiological examinations such as native X-ray examination, magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, ultrasound examination, fluoroscopy, mammography and nuclear medicine are being used in hospitals and health centers worldwide to detect illnesses and body structures. The radiographer performs these procedures in collaboration with other staff. Radiographer's work is based on understanding e.g. physics, human anatomy and the basics of nursing care. Those same aspects are included in the curriculum of degree programme in radiography and radiation therapy. For example in 2017 there were 495 applicants for the degree programme in radiography and radiation therapy in Oulu University of Applied Sciences and 28 applicants were selected (Oulun ammattikorkeakoulu 2017, referred 26.4.2018) but still new experts are needed.

In Finland, radiographer's employment possibilities are promising. We think that the current employment situation seems good. Usually radiographers start working part-time during their studies and that way get a permanent job. Radiographers work mainly in hospital radiology departments and in private healthcare. Beside healthcare, there are also other work opportunities, such as radiation supervisor in industry. According to the Ministry of Labour, there were only 65 radiographers unemployed from July to December in 2017, when at the same time there were 39,5 vacancies. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2018, referred 23.4.2018.)

How the project was done

The aim of the Project working course is to be able to work in projects in the future working life. The course includes all the different phases that can be found in a real life work project, such as project planning, managing, using different planning tools and methods, scheduling and communication, and of course documentation. (Oulun ammattikorkeakoulu 2016, referred 3.5.2018.) There were five groups working with the same project. We had two oral presentations, two poster presentations and one leaflet presentation and the goal was to awake interest in our field.

Several meetings were held to plan the project, its main goals and ways to achieve them. We chose to make a PowerPoint presentation and have an oral presentation, because we felt that it suited our target audience. It consisted of students and student counsellors who are important persons in advising the sophomores in their future plans. By giving valuable information of our special field of health care we hope to get more applicants in our degree programme in the future. The chosen target audience of eleven sophomores was suitable for our project, because there might have been potential applicants for the degree programme in radiography and radiation therapy among them. To evaluate the project and the presentations we had a feedback meeting with other project members from other groups.

Discussion

This project was an excellent learning experience. As an outcome of the project we got useful information for our future careers. We also hope that the presentations inspired students become radiographers and to apply in our degree programme to create more experts for the future.

References available from toimisto@sorf.fi