

An investigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Diagnostic/Therapeutic Radiographers and radiography service provision in Northern Ireland.

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DISCLOSURES

- Nothing to disclose



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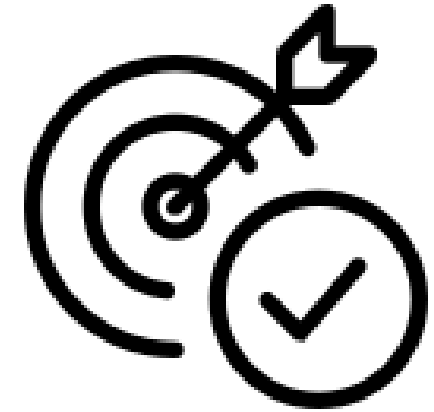


BACKGROUND

- COVID-19 has had a significant impact on radiography staff and service delivery. ¹⁻³
- Cancellation of screening and routine surgery
- Post pandemic bottle neck in service delivery anticipated

Aim

- The study explored the impact of COVID-19 on Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiographers and service provision in Northern Ireland (NI).



METHODOLOGY

- A mixed methods approach was used.
 - A Qualtrics® survey was promoted via social media platforms (Twitter® and Facebook®).
 - Interviews conducted online using Microsoft Teams®.
- Analysis of survey responses was performed using IBM SPSS version 26.
- NVivo 12 was used to conduct thematic analysis using Braun & Clarke's (2006) six stage framework ⁴

Results of Survey

110 respondents to survey Feb-April 2021 (82 Diagnostic and 24 Therapeutic, 4 unspecified).

11 managers interviewed before data saturation achieved

Table 1. The demographics of the 110 respondents

Radiographer grade	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8		No response
	18	51	28	11		2
Professional experience	<5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	>20 years	
	20	19	14	11	22	24
Race	White	BAME				
	108	1				1
Age (years)	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	
	40	40	21	6	1	2
Gender	M	F	Other			
	20	85	1			4
Belong to high risk category	Yes	No				
	8	100				2
Required to shield	Yes	No				
	5	103				2
Live/caring for someone at high risk.	Yes	No				
	19	88				3

Results of Survey

1: Redeployment

Working with
infectious patients

3: PPE

11% of respondents (n=10) moved into a different specialism/role
-7 had previous experience in the specialism/role -3 had not

Respondents reported confidence in undertaking their new role with 6 of the 10
indicating that they would like to continue in the new role post pandemic.

Results of Survey

1: Redeployment

2: Working with
infectious patients

3: PPE

-Initially 43% of respondents declared having no or little experience working with infectious patients.

-Over 75% reported receiving training in infection control, 90% reported feeling comfortable working in the department during the pandemic.

-19% of radiographers indicated that they would welcome further training

Results of Survey

1: Redeployment

Working with
infectious patients

3: PPE

18% of radiographers expressed dissatisfaction regarding access to appropriate PPE in March 2020,

-this dropped to 14% in April 2020

-6% in May 2020

-no one reported dissatisfaction since September 2020.



Results of Interviews

1: Challenges to service provision

2: Impact on staff and managers' wellbeing

3: Lessons Learned for future planning

- i. PPE availability, guidelines and communication
- ii. Impact on Workload
- iii. Patients had their appointments/procedures disrupted, altered or postponed



Results of Interviews

1: Challenges to
service
provision

2: Impact on staff and
managers' wellbeing

3: Lessons Learned
for future planning

- i. Physical and psychological Impact of changing work patterns/ rate
- ii. Fear and/or anxiety around COVID-19
- iii. COVID-19 Fatigue
- iv. Lack of annual leave
- v. Social environment external to work
- vi. Social environment in work
- vii. Staff Resilience
- viii. Patient-related issues



Results of Interviews

1: Challenges to
service
provision

2: Impact on staff and
managers' wellbeing

3: Lessons Learned
for future planning

- i. Mixing of Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary teams
- ii. Improved Infection Control Practices
- iii. Faster Processes (removal of 'red tape')
- iv. More staff flexibility



Concerns for the future in radiography-

1. Waiting list of Patients
2. Staff
3. Flexible, Adaptable and Transparent COVID Response Plan
4. Technology
5. Trust/Regional and Professional Approach
6. Communication with Patients
7. Equipment and Physical Space
8. Patient Experience

DISCUSSION

- Cancer was the number one concern
- Managers felt that working practices would not return to pre-COVID
- Radiography needs to have a stronger identity
- A lot of the 'red tape' which normally slows down processes within the trusts, was removed.
- Some new working practices have been beneficial for service delivery

CONCLUSION

- Great challenges lie ahead for service delivery
- Further investment is required
- Some changes have improved experience for service users
- Managers are proud of their professional and adaptable workforce

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