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Background

- Diagnostic Radiography curricula have remained largely static since the inception of degrees in the late 1980's.
- Medical imaging technology & imaging services have changed significantly e.g. MRI has seen a 220% increase in activity over the last 10 years (% from the BSI England Analytical Services 2014).
- Curricula driven by national occupational standards e.g. HCPC Standards of Proficiency.

Research Questions

- How 'fit for purpose' are radiography graduates?
- Are current curricula aligning with the needs of service?
- How should curricula evolve in the future?

Project intended to open up debates & deepen understanding of current issues.

Method:

- Data collected by means of semi-structured interviews.
- A formalised schedule of open questions was developed to elucidate all priority issues.
- Responses recorded & transcribed verbatim.
- Ethical clearance sought and provided through university ethics committee.
- Participants were provided with relevant information, an interview schedule and consented prior to study.

Participants

- Convenience sample of Radiology Service Managers n=20
- 5 Male, 15 female
Data Analysis

- Straussian Grounded Theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) utilised for the qualitative data
- Responses were initially free coded & grouped into sub themes and meta-themes
- Method designed to display the range of emergent themes and not to accord significance according to frequency of occurrence
- The personal experiences of participants & factors which impact upon service were focussed upon

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Quote related to theme 1

"I mean, one thing that I’ve seen is that radiographers are moving out of general radiography more quickly than ever. Almost to the point where you start to question whether it’s worth doing a radiography degree at all..." (Interview 16)

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Quotes related to theme 2

"Because of the size of general radiography, and the complexity of general radiography, they actually found it quite difficult to maintain competence in more than one modality." (Interview 17)

"We are very, very careful with our new graduates in terms of induction, so, for example, we have a twelve week induction programme, where they’re supernumerary, and it’s well established in terms of they go round all the clinical areas." (Interview 20)

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Theme 1: Curriculum Content & Structure Review

- Curriculum content review
- Curricular content & structure
- Curriculum design & structuring
- Curriculum evaluation & feedback
- Curriculum implementation & delivery
- Curriculum delivery & assessment
- Curriculum structure

Theme 2: Diversification of Role

- Role of radiographer in general radiography
- Role of radiographer in specialist radiography
- Role of radiographer in multi-modality
- Role of radiographer in cross-functional roles
- Role of radiographer in secondary roles
- Role of radiographer in non-clinical roles

Theme 3: Professionalism & Coping

- Professionalism & personal development
- Professionalism & workplace development
- Professionalism & workplace environment
- Professionalism & workplace communication
- Professionalism & workplace interpersonal skills
- Professionalism & workplace teamwork

Theme 4: Curriculum Content & Structure Review

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- Curricular content & structure
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- Curriculum evaluation & feedback
- Curriculum implementation & delivery
- Curriculum delivery & assessment
- Curriculum structure
Quotes related to theme 3 cont.

I think one of the main things for me is about the level of autonomy that... 

Well, things like, you know, you know, the demands of the job, of them having an understanding of the demands of the job, that actually they do have to work weekends and bank holidays, it’s like a shock sometimes to some of them that come in.” (Interview 9)

Theme 4: Reformation of Career Structures

Quotes related to Meta theme 4

“What’s happening here, and I’m sure we’re not alone, is that general radiography is constantly being drained to furnish the staff for the MRI, CT, intervention, so we end up with the junior radiographers doing some of the most complex work.” (Interview 10)

“We should look to building that (projection radiography) as more of a lifelong career for people and not just the stepping stone that a lot of people see it as today” (Interview 3)

Discussion & Conclusions

- Increased pressures and changes in working practices require graduates to be resilient have realistic expectations about their career.
- The role of the radiographer is evolving rapidly and the role is becoming quite nebulous.
- The increase in cross sectional imaging should impact upon the development of future curricula.
- Lack of clinical placement capacity is a major driver for change.
- Education reforms would need to be coupled with career structure reform.
- Significant challenges exist in relation to motivation, communication, professionalism... 
- Marketisation of both health and education producing many issues which both HEIs and employers have to deal with.
- Changes in professional identity, student capacity issues and mismatches between the two are embedded in broader patterns of socioeconomic change. We need to understand this a find fluid and flexible responses to these challenges that start with addressing identity.

References & Author Details


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