

Changing phases in the practice of diagnostic radiography in the United Kingdom: an oral history (1945-1995)

Sola Decker

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Summary

This thesis is a report of an academic research study that used primary textual data generated from oral history interviews of the lived experiences of a purposive sample of twenty-four diagnostic radiographers in the United Kingdom (UK) as primary data.

Using interpretive phenomenology as both the philosophical and methodological framework for the research project, the time frame 1945-1995 was explored from the perspectives of radiographers who have been eyewitnesses to developments in radiography across different decades of the profession's growth. The study therefore adds to the existing knowledge on the sociological analysis of the radiography profession in the UK and a source of reference for the socialisation of new entrants into the profession.

The findings from the study suggested that the professionalisation process in radiography has been gradual but became more evident in the 1980s with the rapid advancement in technology, changes in the relationship between radiologists/doctors and radiographers, radiography education and the reforms in the National Health Service. Radiographers generally have taken the developments and changes in their stride and have a 'get-on-with-it' attitude to work.

Role extension has been one of the key factors defining the professionalisation of radiography. The general opinion among informants was that radiography must negotiate its role within diagnostic imaging as the dominance of radiology over radiography is one that would continue.

The study concluded that radiography education has a key role to play in the continued professionalisation of radiography as the expectations of consumers of health care service, new recruits into the profession and service providers challenge the current education curricula in radiography.

A review of the education curriculum in radiography is therefore recommended as a professional project for the profession in the immediate near future. Additional areas were also identified for further studies.