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EXPERIENCING THE RESEARCH ROLE OF THE CONSULTANT RADIOGRAPHER: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

With “an intelligent overview”, can consultant radiographers overcome the barriers hindering the core domain of research?

Aim

The aim of this study was to explore what the core domain of research means to consultant radiographers in clinical practice and to identify the key factors that facilitate or hinder research activity by this staff group.

Design

Grounded theory research methodology was employed.

There were three phases to the study:

- Literature review.
- Electronic questionnaires to all those in consultant radiographer posts as identified by the Society and College of Radiographers consultant radiographer network.
- Twenty five consultant radiographers invited for telephone interview.

Results

Results indicate there are variations across clinical specialties as to the amount and level of research undertaken by consultant radiographers.

The principal barriers revealed were: lack of time; excessive clinical workload; lack of skills and confidence to undertake research; poor research culture; and lack of support.

The main facilitators noted were: dedicated time, research training and up-skilling; mutually beneficial collaborations; managerial understanding of the research domain of the role; and research focussed on clinical demand.

Conclusion

Research is one of the four core domains of consultant allied health professional and nursing roles but, as yet, it is not fully embedded into those of all consultant radiographers. Many consultant radiographers appear to spend more of their time on the ‘clinical expert’ element of their role at the expense of the research domain.

This research identified factors, from the consultant radiographers’ perspective, that both support and hinder research and suggests that, with ‘an intelligent overview’, some of barriers could be

overcome. This study concludes that there is an urgent need for consultant radiographers to understand why research is one of the four core domains and to recognise the need to embed research into their clinical practice.