

THE COLLEGE OF
RADIOGRAPHERS



RADIOGRAPHY

Role Development in Radiography

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THE SOCIETY OF
RADIOGRAPHERS



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The NHS and Community Care Act (1990) has introduced significant and far reaching changes in health care provision. It has produced a climate in which the traditional methods of delivering health care are being challenged and professional boundaries are becoming blurred. These changes are providing radiographers with a range of opportunities for role development.

1.1.2 This policy document is issued by The College of Radiographers in response to the ever increasing instances of role development being undertaken by radiographers. It offers support, guidance and advice to radiographers working in the many and varied settings of health care delivery, and sets out the policy of The College of Radiographers in relation to role development.

1.1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the Code of Professional Conduct (1994) issued by The College of Radiographers and the Radiographers Board statement on Infamous Conduct.

1.2 What is role development?

Role development is fundamental change to the professional practice of radiographers. It may be defined as representing quantitative and qualitative change in the way radiographers contribute to patient management and health care services. It demands a high level of skill, training, experience and expertise, and facilitates further development.

1.3 Policy of The College of Radiographers

The College of Radiographers actively supports and encourages radiographers to seek opportunities for role development.

2.IMPLEMENTATION OF ROLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Identifying opportunities for role development

Radiographers should be aware of changes in the nature of health care delivery, and should initiate developments in their practice which preserve and enhance high quality patient management and care. These might include the provision of more holistic patient care, or for services to be provided in a more timely manner.

2.2 Seeking support

Radiographers should first develop a proposal locally, and gain in principle agreement from line management and the employing authority, and from appropriate professional colleagues (including radiographers, radiologists, nurses, and other consultant specialities). In developing such a document, radiographers are encouraged to seek professional support from The College of Radiographers. Members of The Society of Radiographers are also entitled to seek advice and guidance locally from their Field Support Officer.

2.3 Developing and agreeing a protocol

2.3.1 The development of a protocol, agreed by all those concerned, is vital. A protocol should address the following points.

Statement of intent - This should outline the objectives of the initiative.

Implementation and review - Clear dates for implementation and review must be stated, together with a clear indication of who will be involved in the review. Modifications to the scope of practice arising from the review must be agreed. Radiographers should be central to, and participate in, the review.

Scope of the service - The scope of the service should be stated clearly. The protocols should be explicit as to what is included and, where there are questions of doubt, explicit as to what is excluded.

Role responsibilities and relationships Professional and managerial lines of accountability should be indicated clearly.

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Training - The protocol should include confirmation of the employer's commitment to training, an indication of the initial and continuing training required, the time scale for the training, and an explanation of the method of assessment of that training.

Medico-legal aspects - The protocol must comply with the Code of Professional Conduct, issued by The College of Radiographers, and the Radiographers Board statement on Infamous Conduct. It should identify clearly that individual professionals are responsible and accountable for their own actions.

2.3.2 The protocol should be a comprehensive document which gives a framework for practice. It should be supported by a quality assurance programme, which includes audit of practice and continuing professional education

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.1 All role development activities must be underpinned by appropriate initial and continuing education and training programmes, which incorporate practice and theory. These should be related to work-based competencies and should be accredited both professionally and academically in accordance with the policies of The College of Radiographers. In order to be so accredited, it is essential that the help and support of a radiography education centre is sought, and that links with education centres be established.

3.2 It is recognised that training programmes for specific role developments may not have been completed prior to their introduction. The College will, however, support such initiatives provided that training has been agreed and has commenced.

4. MEDICO-LEGAL ISSUES

4.1 Professional conduct and responsibility

4.1.1 Role development is subject to the provisions of the statutory and professional codes of conduct which govern professional practice. There is no legal impediment to radiographers developing their role, but nothing must be done which is contrary to the Radiographers Board statement on Infamous Conduct. Account should also be taken of the statements made at paragraph 28 of "Good medical practice" in Duties of a doctor, Guidance from the General Medical Council (1995):

You may delegate medical care to nurses and other health care staff who are not registered medical practitioners if you believe it is best for the patient. But you must be sure that the person to whom you delegate is competent to undertake the procedure or therapy involved.

4.1.2 All professionals are legally responsible for their actions. No one is able to absolve radiographers of this professional responsibility. Particular regard must be had to the need to enter into proper explanation and consenting procedures with the patient, as advised in the Code of Professional Conduct, and as set out in The Patient's Charter.

4.1.3 In observing the duty of care to the patient, radiographers must pay particular regard to the comments made within the Code of Professional Conduct on safe practice:

All radiographers have a duty to ensure that a safe environment is maintained for staff, patients and visitors to the department;

and also on legal responsibility:

Radiographers are legally accountable for their professional actions and for any negligence, whether by act or omission or injury.

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4.2 Employer responsibility

It is the duty and responsibility of the employer to ensure that a person employed to do a job is qualified to do that job, and has the appropriate training, resources and support. Employers are responsible for any act or omission of an employee during the course of their employment.

4.3 Professional indemnity

Radiographers should hold professional indemnity insurance. Such professional indemnity insurance is provided as a benefit of membership of The Society of Radiographers and covers members against claims made in respect of their professional duties. It requires radiographers to exercise an appropriate duty of care, which includes following agreed protocols. A summary of the professional indemnity insurance provided is attached. A copy of the whole policy and all conditions may be inspected at headquarters of The Society of Radiographers in London.

5. CONCLUSION

The College of Radiographers believes that developments in the role of radiographers benefit patients, the National Health Service and the profession. Radiographers are encouraged to seize all opportunities for development presented by the current dynamic health care environment. This policy is supported by The Society of Radiographers.

References & Bibliography

- The College of Radiographers (1994) Code of Professional Conduct
- The College of Radiographers (1995) Role development - Towards 2000
- Department of Health (1992) The Patient's Charter
- General Medical Council (1995) Good medical practice
- Radiographers Board Statement on Infamous Conduct
- NHS and Community Care Act (1990)

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