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What Radiography offers to therapeutic radiographers/radiation therapists

This is an exciting time for all of us who are interested in developments in therapeutic radiography/radiation therapy. It is a fascinating challenge to keep abreast of transformational shifts in theory and practice such as the impact of artificial intelligence (AI), increased personalisation and stratification of cancer treatments based on genomics and patient risk, the expansion of particle therapies, MR Linacs and online adaptive radiotherapy. Radiotherapy educational programmes must continually evolve to reflect, and seek to influence, key areas of development whilst emphasising the central patient care role that radiographers play as they operate at the interface of the human and the technological. Radiography aims to contribute to the professional understanding and debate within therapeutic radiography by publishing articles that address the important issues in clinical, scientific, educational, and professional practice.

Oncology publishing is a big and varied space however, *Radiography* offers a distinct focus on the things that matter to therapeutic radiographers and radiation therapists. What we offer is dependent on the manuscripts that we receive, so this editorial is both an opportunity to showcase our role in this community and a clarion call for you submit to us the exciting and innovative work that you are involved in. So much important work is highlighted at conferences and other forums, which deserves wider dissemination through publication in peer-review journals. It is not essential that articles focus on the headline 'sexy' areas of development outlined above. Equally important are the articles that contribute the original insights that form the basis of incremental improvements in our day-to-day practice. All research builds upon existing collective work and radiotherapy has a longstanding tradition of old, sometimes obscure, ideas coming back into vogue because of shifts in technology or clinical need. A journal like *Radiography* provides a permanent, citable record of scientific activities, ideas, and findings.

In this issue, 28(2), we would particularly draw your attention to two papers that demonstrably address important professional and educational topics for radiotherapy:

- i. Nightingale et al. explore the recruitment issues facing radiotherapy: specifically, the factors influencing whether males choose to study therapeutic radiography.¹ This research uses methodologically robust methods to provide engaging and persuasive insights about the potential to tap an underdeveloped source of therapeutic radiographers. The implications of the current under-representation are considered sensitively against the sometimes febrile atmosphere around gender issues.
- ii. Lykowski, Jhagra, and Bennett evaluate the extent to which current teaching on proton beam therapy offered by UK higher education institutions is appropriate to meet the developing need for a competent workforce.² Survey findings on current pedagogical provision are distilled to enable recommendations for pre- and post-registration education and training.

In addition to these two articles, the current issue contains a wide variety of articles across all areas of diagnostic radiography, addressing professional issues, education and training, modalities, and radiation protection. Many of these will be of interest to the radiotherapy community. This issue also includes a guest editorial for the Radiotherapy Committee of the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS), which highlights the importance of patient engagement and inclusion in radiotherapy practice based on the recently published EFRS statement on 'Patient engagement and inclusion in Radiotherapy'.^{3,4}

This editorial is also a perfect opportunity to reflect on some of the radiotherapy highlights from the past 12 months.

Unsurprisingly, diverse clinical issues are well represented, including: assessing the effectiveness of an innovative application of routine thoracic radiotherapy imaging data to detect COVID19⁵; a comprehensive systematic review of current interventions to manage or radiation-induced skin reactions⁶; a qualitative investigation of a novel radiographer-led real-time online adaptive radiotherapy workflow guided by MR imaging⁷; the patient perspective on the acceptability of supplementary MRI imaging in the CT radiotherapy planning pathway for lung cancer⁸; the preferences of cancer patients and carers in Denmark regarding booking their own CT appointments using an online system.⁹

A range of methodologies are used to evaluate aspects of international radiotherapy education. As part of the SAFE Europe project, which explores competencies across a range of domains for radiotherapy radiographers/radiation therapists, Couto et al. explore the perceptions of key stakeholders on radiotherapy competencies across Europe.¹⁰ A qualitative review using interpretative phenomenological analysis explores the sometimes daunting lived experience of first-year radiation therapy students communicating with patients and radiation therapists in Australia.¹¹ At the other end of the educational pathway, and world, is an exploration of UK final year therapeutic radiography students about to start practice during Covid-19.¹²

Our ever-changing professional role can be considered as its own sub-category of therapeutic radiography research. For example, Parkinson et al. provide a timely review of the application of AI in the radiotherapy workforce, and our place in that developing space.¹³ A literature review explores the perceived impact, challenges and barriers of advanced and consultant practice in therapeutic radiography,¹⁴ whilst Fisher evaluates the role of people who have risen to Consultant Radiographer status in facilitating access to palliative radiotherapy.¹⁵ Finally, a mixed methods study evaluates the potential of existing online training to support therapeutic radiographers to deliver physical activity and dietary advice to their patients.¹⁶

The articles featured above provide a snapshot of the many works we publish that have or will influence radiotherapy practitioners, managers, and policy makers. The wide subject base of our relatively small profession is striking, with scientific, technical, psychological, and sociological strands evident – we welcome the challenge of incorporating this diversity into our journal.

So we are open for radiotherapy business, and we actively seek submissions from you, about the issues and work that is important to you. We publish radiotherapy content from all over the world. We work with first time authors and experienced researchers alike, and with large and small interdisciplinary groups. Full details of the types of articles that we accept are outlined in our author information (see: <https://www.radiographyonline.com/content/authorinfo>) but in brief we span the methodological continuum from qualitative through mixed methods to quantitative research, as each approach can provide unique and complementary knowledge. We also welcome review articles of relevance to our readership and encourage letters to the editor to facilitate debate on any of the works published.

We look forward to receiving your therapeutic radiography papers and seeing your work influence our profession.

Conflict of interest statement None.

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