

Title

The case for radiographer reporting in Ghana

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Purpose

Ghana faces a severe shortage of radiologists. Many radiographs go unreported, especially outside the capital city Accra. We explore the opportunities for role-extended radiographer reporting in Ghana and evaluate the potential to improve patient care.

Methods and Materials

A case study method was used to analyse three imaging sites in depth. Site selection ensured variation in geographical and radiology coverage. Data sources were semi-structured interviews, observation of working practices and analysis of available policy and guidance documents. Data were analysed within and across cases and synthesised thematically.

Results

Ten radiographers and three radiologists and medical officers were interviewed, 14 of whom were also observed for 16 hours each. Health service policy and legislative documents were analysed. Key arising thematic areas are: the *professional challenges to practice* that both impede patient access to quality healthcare and provide opportunities for radiographer role extension; the *education and training* to introduce and sustain radiographer reporting and establish credibility with key stakeholders; *policy* required to guide the implementation of, and ensure high practice standards for, radiographer reporting in Ghana.

Conclusion

Plain radiograph reporting is the radiographic practice most likely to improve access to quality healthcare in Ghana. We will outline the postgraduate education and regulatory policy required to galvanise change from national stakeholders and replace instances of unauthorised radiographer reporting identified in our data. We make a novel contribution to the evidence for role extension in radiography by informing a framework for developing countries/low resource settings, where professional structures are often less mature.