

2310: The development of a UK curriculum for therapeutic radiographers at an advanced level of practice [abstract only]

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The development of a UK curriculum for therapeutic radiographers working at an advanced level of practice.

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Purpose

A rapidly increasing workload in radiotherapy with increasingly complex, technically demanding, radiotherapy techniques is well documented ¹. This has led to a workforce crisis across radiotherapy services in the UK. The Royal College of Radiologists workforce census has repeatedly demonstrated a shortage of clinical oncologists, and this is predicted to continue to rise in the short to medium term ². NHS England is looking to skill mix and developing its non-medical workforce to practice at enhanced, advanced and consultant levels to respond to this need ³.

In developing a curriculum framework to train advanced practitioners it was aligned to the multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England, the Royal College of Radiologists, and the Royal College of Physicians specialty training curricula. This provided a robust and meaningful structure to train practitioners to an advanced level. It provides core skills and knowledge for anyone practising at advanced level within radiotherapy, and a wide variety of competencies which can be selected to provide an appropriate structure for training to meet an individual scope of practice ⁴.

Methods

A national consultation was undertaken using a purposive sampling approach with data collection via a survey using a mixture of open and closed questions. To ensure rigour the survey was developed by a small focus group of key stakeholders, inclusive of the College of Radiographers, NHSe (formally Health Education England), and education providers with expertise in advanced practice. After the focus group the curriculum framework and the questions were reviewed by the patient advisory group at the College of Radiographers to ensure co-production.

The survey intended to answer the following aims:

Critically evaluate the suitability of the framework in relation to the variety roles at advanced level within non-surgical oncology.

Identify the barriers and enablers to the implementation of the non-surgical oncology advanced practice curricular framework.

The survey was shared across social media, shared with professional bodies and other key stakeholders. The survey was open for four weeks and extended for additional two weeks due to the timing of the release. Consent was gained through access to the survey where no identifiable information was collected. Ethical approval for the project was gained from Sheffield Hallam University.

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to gain depth of analysis.

No funding was assigned to this project.

Results

From the survey there were 51 responses, with an additional 3 group submissions from professionally recognised groups and 2 individual responses. All were considered as part of the analysis to ensure all views were considered. The themes that were:

- Inclusivity of all professions
- Curriculum content
- Implementation considerations
- Delivery of the curriculum framework

Conclusion

The conclusions of this national consultation have highlighted the need for further discussion on how advanced level roles within Radiotherapy align to the national guidance across nursing, midwifery, and allied health professions. Further development of the content and the alignment to wider considerations of patient care to ensure a well-rounded practitioner will inform the final version of the curriculum framework. Structure of the curriculum will be considered to ensure ease of use and implementation. This will also link to the delivery of the curriculum across the sub specialities and professions within the radiotherapy service. Further research will be undertaken to gain further involvement from patient and carer groups to inform further development of the content. Wider research on the impact and implementation of the curriculum will also be completed in a timely manner.

References (not included in word count)

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Keywords

- Advanced Practice.
- Career progression.
- Education and training.