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New BIR survey shows more than half of UK radiographers don't believe they have adequate COVID-19 PPE, testing or cleaning supplies

The British Institute of Radiology (BIR) conducted a survey of imaging and oncology professionals between 29 April and 1 May 2020. The survey was completed by 561 UK based radiographers, 65 radiologists, 11 scientists working in healthcare and 6 oncologists.

Radiographers are front line healthcare professionals. 98% of radiographers responding to the survey said that as a necessary part of their current work they come into physical contact or close proximity with other people (such as patients or colleagues) every working day.

Radiographers undertake a broad range of diagnostic examinations or radiotherapy procedures. Diagnostic radiographers work in areas that include X-ray, Ultrasound, Fluoroscopy, CT, MRI, Nuclear Medicine, Angiography and Mammography. Therapeutic radiographers are responsible for the planning and delivery of radiotherapy treatments.

The results show that only a minority of the 561 radiographers surveyed thought that the provision of COVID-19 PPE, testing or cleaning supplies, equipment or cleaning staff was adequate where they worked for people in their role. Just 23% said they believed testing was adequate, with 24% saying it was 'very inadequate'. Only 36% said they thought provision of COVID-19 PPE was adequate for people in their role. More detail is shown in the table below.

To what extent do you believe there is adequate provision (where you work) in the following areas to deal with the current situation as it is TODAY

| | Adequate | Almost adequate | Not adequate | Very inadequate | Don't know/NA |
|---|----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| COVID-19 PPE for people in your specific role | 36% | 39% | 19% | 5% | 1% |
| COVID-19 PPE for patients | 36% | 24% | 20% | 9% | 11% |
| COVID-19 testing for people in your specific role | 23% | 21% | 24% | 24% | 8% |
| Antibody testing for people in your specific role | 1% | 2% | 13% | 57% | 27% |
| Cleaning supplies & equipment | 43% | 37% | 14% | 4% | 1% |
| Cleaning staff | 34% | 32% | 17% | 10% | 6% |

UK Radiographers | Sample size 561 | 29 April 2020 – 1 May 2020 | BIR online survey

The radiographers surveyed were not optimistic about prospects for improvement over the next three months. The survey shows a belief among radiographers that provision of COVID-19 PPE and cleaning supplies will be less adequate in coming months than today, with only 21% believing PPE provision will be adequate within the next three months (compared with 36% today) and 35% believing that cleaning supplies will be adequate (compared with 44% today).

How much confidence do you have that there will be adequate provision (where you work) to deal with the situation as you can envisage it developing within the NEXT THREE MONTHS?

| | Adequate | Almost adequate | Not adequate | Very inadequate | Don't know/NA |
|---|----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| COVID-19 PPE for people in your specific role | 21% | 33% | 30% | 11% | 5% |
| COVID-19 PPE for patients | 22% | 25% | 25% | 11% | 17% |
| COVID-19 testing for people in your specific role | 30% | 22% | 24% | 14% | 9% |
| Antibody testing for people in your specific role | 4% | 8% | 25% | 29% | 33% |
| Cleaning supplies & equipment | 35% | 34% | 17% | 7% | 6% |
| Cleaning staff | 34% | 30% | 16% | 9% | 11% |

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61 UK based radiologists also responded to the survey, of whom 65% said they came into daily contact with people as a necessary part of their work. 55% of the radiologists surveyed said they believed there is currently adequate COVID-19 PPE for people in their role and 33% said they thought there was adequate testing. 11 scientists and 6 oncologists also responded, giving similar results.

Dr Jane Phillips-Hughes, President of the British Institute of Radiology, said “Radiographers, as well as radiologists, oncologists, scientists and others, are putting themselves at risk every day to help patients during this emergency. In performing examinations such as Chest X-ray and CT scanning, they are vital frontline workers. It is essential that their level of risk is recognised, that they feel supported and that they are provided with the PPE and other supplies needed to keep them and their patients as safe as possible. It is also essential that testing should be available to healthcare staff working with patients, including imaging and oncology professionals.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About The British Institute of Radiology

The British Institute of Radiology is an international membership organisation for everyone working in imaging, radiation oncology and the underlying sciences.

Our aims are to:

- support the work of our members and their colleagues to achieve professional excellence
- provide continuing professional development for our multidisciplinary community
- publish cutting-edge research for our authors and readers across the world
- influence and connect with the wider professional sector.

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