

SESSION A2

A2.1 Mapping the migrant diagnostic radiographers in the UK: a national survey

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Introduction: The international recruitment of healthcare workers remains a UK strategy to manage workforce gaps and maintain service delivery.¹ Although this is not a new phenomenon, the profile of this has been raised by chronic shortages. There is a need to profile the current international recruits and identify individual motivators to understand the opportunities for future **recruitment** and retention initiatives.

Method: A UK-wide electronic survey was conducted using the Jisc platform. The survey was promoted using social media and researcher networks. Eligibility criteria were: diagnostic radiographers, internationally educated, and currently working in the UK.

Results: 226 responses were received. Most were working in England (93%) and 58% were under 35 years of age. The majority had migrated having moved to the UK since 2020 (65%) and the main drivers were career and/or training opportunities (84%). Initial education was in 30 different countries, the highest number originating from Africa and Asia, with a median of 6 years post-qualification experience (IQR 4-11yrs). Despite experience, most were employed in band 5 (n=72) or band 6 posts (n=95). 56% had postgraduate qualifications on entry and a third had undertaken postgraduate study in the UK. Most respondents were married (63%) and 59% are currently intending to remain in the UK long term.

Conclusion: Based on the survey responses, internationally recruited diagnostic radiographers are motivated to work in the UK through career progression opportunities. The profile is one of a relatively young, educated workforce with family commitments but offers a long-term retention opportunity.

References

¹ NHS England. (2023). NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan-v1.2.pdf>. (Accessed December 21, 2023).

A2.2 Integration experiences of internationally educated radiographers working in the UK

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Background: Diagnostic radiography is experiencing severe workforce deficits at a time of expanding demand on services. As part of the strategy to meet demands and sustainably service delivery, recruitment of internationally educated diagnostic radiographers to the NHS has and is being undertaken.

Method: A JISC survey was distributed throughout the UK via social media and professional networks. The survey comprised demographic, multi-response, Likert scale and free text questions. This presentation reports on the integration experiences, whilst the mapping of migrant diagnostic radiographers from this survey is reported separately. Ethical approval (EC27952).

Results: 226 diagnostic radiographers completed the survey. The majority of respondents felt supported by their colleagues and managers to address any anxiety they felt and expressed satisfaction with the training/mentorship received during their induction. However, there were challenges faced by respondents in their personal transition domains such as feelings of not knowing what to expect and nervousness while adjusting to new work environments. Half felt isolated after starting their new roles while a third felt unable to "fit-in" culturally within the team. Some of these challenges correlated positively with variables such as participants' continent of origin and intentions to remain in the UK.

Conclusion: There are positive indications that internationally educated diagnostic radiographers feel supported to enable their integration into the UK workforce. However, experiences of personal and work transition challenges still exist especially among radiographers from certain continents. This indicates that more can be done to integrate, support, value and maximise talent.

A2.3 Implementation of a collaborative radiotherapy open day to improve student recruitment and retention

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Purpose: Attrition rates amongst students from pre – registration Therapeutic Radiography (TR) programmes are as high as 42.9% in the UK (1.) 'Wrong career choice' has been identified as a major factor in student attrition, with 70% of higher education institutions (HEI) citing this when surveyed (2).

Methods: Four collaborative open day events provided prospective students with information and practical demonstrations on the following:

1. A day in the life of a student
2. Pre-treatment
3. Treatment and imaging
4. Career development opportunities

Pre and post visit questionnaires were completed using a Likert scale.

Results: A significant increase of prospective student’s knowledge was identified following attendance at an event. 91% of participants had an increased level of knowledge and understanding regarding a career in radiotherapy (table 1). 79% of participants expressed an increased level of knowledge surrounding the day to day role of a TR (table 2). 89% of prospective students had increased understanding of clinical placements.

Participants describe the event as an “informative insight into Therapeutic Radiography”, and that it allowed them to gain “a real feel for the job”. Crucially, respondents explained that the open day event “made me realise Therapeutic Radiography is the right course for me”, and that “it’s definitely the job I want to go in to”.

Conclusion: The results demonstrate the effectiveness of an open day at increasing prospective student’s knowledge, indicating that the event has the potential to reduce ‘wrong career choice’ attrition through ensuring students are fully informed prior to admission.

Table

Table 1: On a scale of 1-5 how much knowledge and understanding do you feel you have about a career in radiotherapy?



Table 2: On a scale of 1-5 how much knowledge do you feel you have about the day to day role of a Therapeutic Radiographer?



References

1. The College of Radiographers (2021) Approval and Accreditation Board; Annual Report 2020-2021. Available at: <https://www.collegeofradiographers.ac.uk/about-the-college/document-library/documents-and-reports/approval-and-accreditation-board;-annual-report-20> (Accessed 20th July 2023).
2. Health Education England (2021). Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention in Radiotherapy. Available at: <https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/reducing-pre-registration-attrition-and-improving> (Accessed 20th July 2023).

A2.4 Managing the workforce crisis: An overview of the InHealth approach to international recruitment, wellbeing and E,D&I

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By 2030, the WHO estimates there will be a global shortage of approximately 18 million health workers, 20% of the workforce needed. The UK healthcare workforce is not growing fast enough to keep up with demand, and urgent actions are needed to ensure safe patient care, improved outcomes, innovation and service development.

There are many approaches to solving this problem, and in addition to local and national actions, InHealth have developed an international stream so a significant number of new staff join us from abroad every month. Staff have been recruited into many roles including radiographers and nurses from a wide range of countries.

Training and support can start from the home country, and then staff join a tailored programme in the UK to ensure they are competent, confident, welcomed into the team and fully supported to start their life here.

For international staff there are additional considerations around wellbeing and E,D & I, and InHealth continue to optimise how we look after this group of staff and learn from them too.

Our approach incorporates key themes in the NHS People Plan with a focus around looking after our people, growing for the future and how we support our people now and for the long term.

Our joint presentation will include an overview of the InHealth international recruitment programme from our CMO, and a personal journey with highs and lows from one of our senior radiographers who joined us in the pandemic and is now also a Wellbeing Champion.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/data-and-charts/nhs-workforce-nutshell>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

<https://kpmg.com/xx/en/home/insights/2019/03/human-solving-the-global-workforce-crisis-in-healthcare.html>

A2.5 Integrating radiography apprenticeships within the independent healthcare sector: A service evaluation of apprentice assistant practitioners' experiences

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Background: In 2023 The Long-Term Workforce Plan was released with an emphasis on increasing the number of apprenticeship programmes to accommodate the increasing demand on health services (1). The increasing career pathway opportunities enable radiology assistants to undertake training to become qualified assistant practitioners (2). In May 2023, a strategic plan was implemented within our private hospitals to provide opportunities for workforce development within radiography.

Aim: To explore the experiences of apprentice assistant practitioners (radiography) working within the independent healthcare sector.

Method: Seven apprentices (N=7) were recruited who had completed their first year of study. An online focus group was used to perform the service evaluation. The qualitative data derived from the focus groups were compared and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of being a learner and employee.

Results: Three superordinate themes emerged from the data set: 1) Challenges surrounding obtaining a number of x-ray projections for portfolio 2) building awareness of radiography apprenticeships amongst peers and clinical educators, 3) effective time management practices of study and work. Whilst these findings corroborated with existing literature (3), there are potential strategies to improve these findings.

Conclusion: Potential strategies to support apprentices in meeting their required x-ray projections would be to build relationships and offer reciprocal placement opportunities with NHS trusts. In addition, the use of simulation is gaining momentum to provide more application of learning in the workplace. Raising awareness of apprenticeships within radiography through strategic workforce communications would be advantageous.

References

1. NHS England (2023) NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publications/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan/> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

2. Society of Radiographers (2020) Assistant Practitioners. Available at: <https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/career-development/practice-level-information/assistant-practitioners> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

3. Green, D, Heales, C, Hughes, D, Marsden, A and Mills, J. (2022) Exploring current undergraduate student perspectives on the introduction of the degree apprenticeship scheme in diagnostic radiography – a single institution study. *Radiography* 28(4): 1058-1063.

A2.6 Apprenticeships and support worker career development

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Background: Workforce challenges in the NHS presents a greater threat to health services than funding, with current shortages of more than 100,000 staff [1]. The apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017 with the first programme launched in 2020. There has been considerable work done to develop and enhance apprenticeship degrees[2].

Apprenticeship training differs from the conventional degree route [1]. When first introduced, apprenticeship training for diagnostic radiography raised questions about its impact on the existing market, capacity and how current clinical departments may struggle with day-to-day management. Radiation department assistants (RDA's) have the option of foundation degree apprenticeship level 4/5 and on the bridging to top-up apprenticeship to a diagnostic radiographer. There are options for the full bachelor's degree.

Purpose: This work high-lights what is offered in the trust with the running of engagement sessions for those members of staff who may be looking at career development clinically into diagnostic radiography. In addition, following selection some 'introduction to imaging sessions' are run in the shape of in-house teaching on the basics of imaging. It will also discuss some of the issue which have risen and what the future may hold.

Summary of content: This work looks at current issues including capacity and how the apprentices fit in. What our trust career pathway looks like for support staff. How we support our apprentices, so their experience and knowledge is comparable with undergraduate training. What does the future hold, can we support those on T-levels and will that benefit our work force?

References

1. The health care workforce in England: Make or break? (no date) The King's Fund. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/reports/health-care-workforce-england> (Accessed: 11 February 2024).
 2. (No date) Diagnostic Imaging Network Workforce guidance. Available at: https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/B0418_Diagnostic-imaging-network-workforce-guidance_April-2022.pdf (Accessed: 11 February 2024).
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