

## SHORT PAPER SESSION A2

### A2.1 Exploring the experiences and perspectives of women with breast cancer in the radiotherapy department in Ghana: A qualitative study

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#### Background

The patient is the recipient of the healthcare services. Patients who participate in the decisions about their health and are effectively considered important members of the healthcare team have better outcomes in recovery (Ciria-Suarez et al., 2021). A study outlining the pathways in managing breast cancer revealed that understanding the needs the patient is important to improve the healthcare system (Mburu et al., 2021).

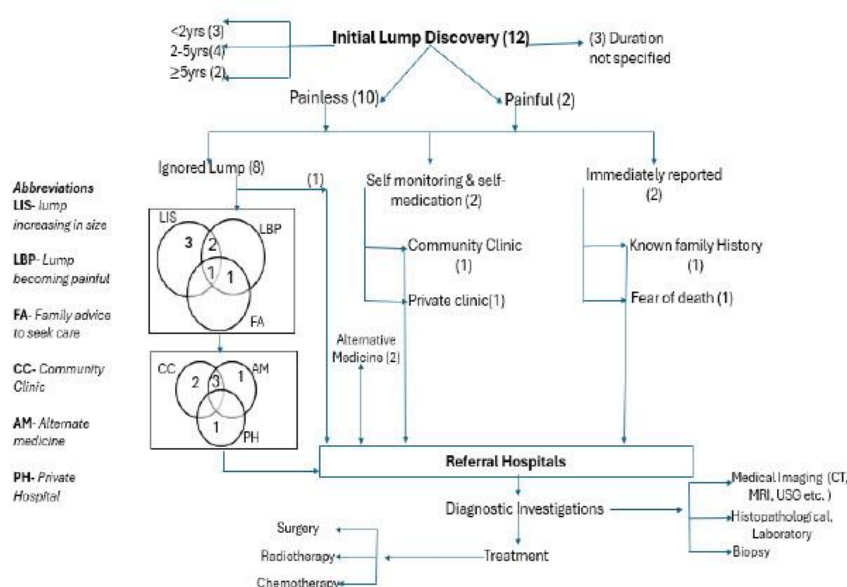
#### Methods

A semi-structured interview involving patients was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of breast cancer care experiences. The NVivo software (version 14) was used to analyse.

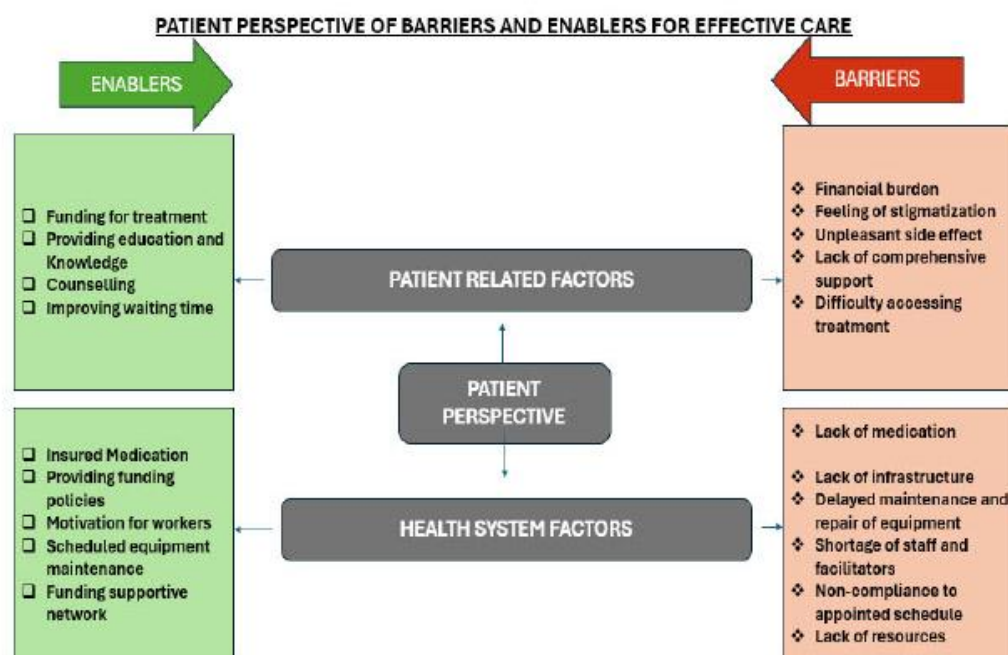
#### Results

A total of 12 patients with breast cancer were interviewed. The participants were all women between the ages of 35 and 70. Five of the women were not employed, and the others were employed either in trading (n = 3/12) or as a nurse (n=2), teacher (n=1), or civil servant (n=1). The women were diagnosed with stage III breast cancer (n=6), stage I (n=1), stage II (n=2) and stage IV (n=3). The three main themes were: firstly, the breast cancer diagnostic journey as a critical step, Secondly, the patients' perceptions of care revealing major barriers and enablers to effective care, and thirdly, an enhanced patient-centred care approach that provides and sustains a supportive network and incorporates an efficient referral system. The study sheds light on women's experiences receiving care within the radiotherapy department. It provided new insight into ways of improving the care experiences of women.

Keywords: breast cancer, radiotherapy, healthcare providers, experiences.



**Figure 1. The breast cancer diagnostic journey among 12 women receiving treatment within the Radiotherapy department**



**Figure 2 Patient perspective of the barriers and enablers to breast cancer effective care within the Radiotherapy department.**

Ciria-Suarez, L. et al. (2021) 'Breast cancer patient experiences through a journey map: A qualitative study', PLoS ONE, 16(9 September), pp. 1–23. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0257680>.

Mburu, W. et al. (2021) 'Pathways to Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Among Women in Ghana: A Qualitative Study', Women's Health Reports, pp. 234–244. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1089/whr.2020.0117>.

## A2.2 Mammography and people with intellectual disabilities: Radiographers' perspectives

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### Background

Breast cancer (BC) is the second most prevalent cancer in Ireland with over 3,000 people being diagnosed each year. BC rates in people with intellectual disabilities (PWID) are similar to those of the general population, however reports indicate that PWID are less likely to undergo screening and often present to symptomatic clinics with far more advanced cancers. While studies have sought to explore contributing factors from the perspective of PWID and the carers, to the authors' knowledge, there is limited research from the health service providers perspective. The aim of this study was to explore mammographers' experiences of undertaking breast imaging on PWID.

### Methods

A qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was undertaken with eleven mammographers from screening and symptomatic settings, all of whom had experience providing mammography for PWID. Questions focused on participants' experiences as well as identifying perceived facilitators and barriers to PWID accessing imaging. Thematic analysis was undertaken.

### Results

Three core themes were identified 1) Communication 2) Choice&Autonomy 3) Resources&Logistics. Participants expressed a wish to provide inclusive and compassionate care, highlighting the importance of communication, choice, engaging with caregivers and offering practical accommodations for PWID. Participants also identified some existing barriers that may contribute to poorer experiences.

### Conclusion

This study emphasised the importance of communication between health care professionals when supporting PWID as well as identifying the need for increased interdisciplinary collaboration/education. There is a need for the standard use of accessible communications and resources to cater for all patients across a diverse range of needs.

## A2.3 Radiographers' and student radiographers' perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes towards older people

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**Background:** The ageing global population presents significant challenges and opportunities for healthcare, particularly for diagnostic radiographers who provide essential imaging services. This study aims to evaluate the perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes of qualified and student diagnostic radiographers towards older individuals.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional online survey design was employed and delivered using Qualtrics. A combination of customised questions and validated instruments, including the Kogan's Attitude towards Older People (KAOP) scale and an adapted version of Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz (FOAQ) were selected as research instruments. Following data collection analysis involved descriptive statistics.

**Results:** A total of 149 respondents participated, 94 (63%) were radiographers and 55 (37%) were students. Results indicated that many participants recognise the additional challenges when imaging older patients and feel inadequately trained. Female radiographers scored higher on both the KAOP and FOAQ scales when compared to males. A significant number of participants reported insufficient formal education on geriatric care / imaging.

**Conclusions:** The study highlights the need for enhanced educational curricula and ongoing professional development. Improvements need to be focused on geriatric care specific to radiography. Improving the knowledge and attitudes of radiographers towards older patients through targeted interventions could also lead to better patient outcomes and a more respectful healthcare environment. The findings underscore the importance of specialised training to meet the unique healthcare needs of an ageing population.

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## A2.4 Patient experiences of additional MR imaging during the non-small cell lung cancer radiotherapy pathway

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### Background

Patients' experiences are an important consideration when developing new MRI-guided radiotherapy techniques. The aim of this study was to explore patient experiences of additional MRI performed as part of a clinical study of MRI-guided radiotherapy for non-small cell lung cancer.

### Method

Ten stage I-IV NSCLC patients agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews. Areas of focus for the interviews included:

- Patient experience of imaging sessions
- Improvement of the experience
- What do patients feel is important when implementing a new MR-guided radiotherapy technique?

Thematic analysis was undertaken.

### Results

Predominant themes were comfort, compliance and communication. Eight patients experienced some discomfort during MRI, primarily linked to maintaining an elevated arm position during immobilisation. However, participants focused on perceived benefits of MRI, indicating a desire to avoid interruptions and to persevere, rating this as the most significant factor in their continued compliance.

Environmental issues, such as scanner noise and room temperature, also contributed to comfort levels. Patients highlighted the positive impact of clear communication from imaging professionals. Communication of the potential benefits of the scan was perceived as important for implementing new MRI-guided treatments.

### Conclusion

Lung cancer patients' experience of MRI is influenced by comfort, and a desire to comply with processes they perceive as being "beneficial" to their treatment. Patients place a high value on supportive communication from the clinical team. The integration of MRI within the lung cancer treatment pathway was seen as feasible by participants, even by those who indicated they struggled with extended imaging times.

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## A2.5 Supporting the breast cancer community: Respire+ web-based resources for patients and healthcare professionals

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### Introduction

Over 33,000 episodes of radiotherapy for breast cancer were delivered in 2022-2023(UK). External beam radiotherapy to the breast or chest wall may result in some level of Radiation Induced Skin Reaction (RISR) or breast/trunk lymphoedema(BTL). Psychological stress may increase the RISR experienced and good patient preparation resources may reduce patient anxiety or stress.

Patients report being unprepared for the development of breast/trunk lymphoedema and report difficulties in having their concerns acknowledged by healthcare practitioners. Delay in obtaining a lymphoedema diagnosis leads to anxiety and worsening of symptoms.

The wellbeing costs to the UK economy of a breast cancer diagnosis was estimated to be £17.5 billion for 2024. There is an urgent need for high quality evidence-based information to prepare patients for the potential development of RISR and BTL allowing early interventions and onward referral, reducing complication risk and longer-term healthcare costs.

### Methods

Using co-design methodology, patient advocates with experience of RISRs and BTL (n= 11) and Therapeutic Radiographers (n=15) were engaged to understand information needs from key stakeholders.

Workshops and interviews were the basis for the development of patient-led educational resources.

### Results

Information needs were reflected in two overarching themes, i) Knowledge is strength, and ii) Someone like me (see Figure 1).

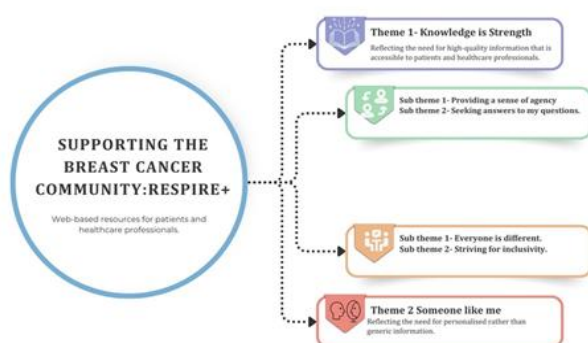
Outcomes: Sustainable web-based resources including two co-designed patient self-monitoring tools, myth-busting animations and 'Talking Heads' patient videos.

Figure 1 One Community for Breast Cancer Care after Radiotherapy.

### Conclusion

The Respire+ website will provide sustainable resources, promoting patient self-management and raising awareness across the breast cancer community.

Figure 1 One Community for Breast Cancer Care after Radiotherapy.



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