

## SHORT PAPER SESSION I2

**I2.1 Understanding patients' perceptions of advanced practitioners providing healthcare: Implementing outcomes into education and training**

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**Background**

The increasing demand for non-surgical oncology (NSO) has driven workforce innovation, with skilled nursing, allied health professionals and pharmacists undertaking education and training to undertake advanced responsibilities in clinical decision-making and patient management. Regional disparities in education and training present challenges, to address these inconsistencies a national capability framework for Advanced Practitioners (APs) in NSO has been developed with the inclusion of the patient voice being an integral part of its development.

**Method**

A two-phased qualitative study was conducted using a phenomenological approach to explore patient and carer perceptions of advanced practice. Phase one involved an online survey distributed through patient networks (n=7), while phase two consisted of an online focus group (n=4) discussing the capability framework. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the survey. Braun and Clark's thematic analysis was undertaken on the transcribed focus group discussions.

**Results**

Survey respondents generally supported being cared for by an AP but emphasised the need for clear role identification and professional visibility. Thematic analysis of the focus group identified four key themes:

- Development of attitudes and behaviours to foster trust
- Involvement of those with lived experience in training and assessment
- Consideration of the impact of training and expectations of APs
- The four pillars of practice and the expected standard of training

**Conclusion**

Findings reinforce the need for a structured, patient-informed framework for APs in NSO. Ensuring role clarity, high educational standards, AP well-being and patient-centred competencies is vital for fostering trust and improving care quality.

**I2.2 Exploring UK sonographers views on the use of professional supervision – Stage two findings**

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**Background**

Professional Supervision (PS) is a formal process which supports the clinical skills and emotional wellbeing of a professional<sup>1-3</sup>. Within the United Kingdom (UK), PS is not part of standard practice for sonographers unlike many other healthcare professionals<sup>4</sup>.

A two-stage mixed methods study was conducted to explore UK sonographer views on the use of PS in practice. This abstract reports on stage two findings.

**Method**

Following ethical approval, a series of online semi-structured focus groups or interviews were undertaken across four subgroups of participants. The four subgroups were sonographers (3), clinical specialist and consultant sonographers (1), ultrasound managers (3) and professional body officers (1).

**Results**

Thematic analysis was completed by two researchers who identified strong themes around the definition of PS and how this was interpreted and misunderstood at times. Barriers to PS were noted with staffing retention and demands of workloads being strong themes. Participants noted strong support mechanisms in workplaces however these were not formal processes and often relied on peer support. The impact on quality patient care was highlighted as being a potential benefit of PS. The emotional burden and wellbeing was noted across all subgroups and the potential impact that better support mechanisms and PS could have on this.

**Conclusion**

This study has provided insight into the views of the sonographer workforce on PS and the impact this could have on the sonographer role. There is potential for a positive

1. Wallbank, S., Hatton, S. Reducing burnout and stress: the effectiveness of clinical supervision. *Community Pract.* 2011; 84: 7: 31-35.
2. Lynch, L., Hancox, K., Happell, B., Parker, J. *Clinical supervision for nurses*. 2009. Wiley Blackwell, UK.
3. Lyth, G.M. Clinical Supervision: A concept analysis. *J Adv Nurs*. 2000; 31: 3: 722-729
4. Coleman, G., Hyde, E. Is there a role for professional supervision in supporting the professional and personal wellbeing of the sonographic workforce? A literature review. *Radiography*. 2022; 28 991-998.

## 12.3 Utilising summer internships as an on-ramp to clinical science in radiotherapy

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This hospital has used charitable funding to fund five years of summer internships in radiotherapy across two sites. These internships consist of eight weeks of placement, comprising both of traditional shadowing opportunities as well as actioning targeted projects which are undertaken with the support of registered clinical scientists. After three years of the programme, all interns able to be followed up with are now studying under the STP or imminently applying to do so. Additionally, the work done by these interns has led to specific service improvements which likely would not have happened without the opportunity to give dedicated time to implementation. This presentation aims to discuss the funding model, application process, candidate selection rationale and programme management used, in addition to presenting a range of specific projects and their benefits. We believe that this model can be replicated in other departments to convert charitable funding to improvements in 1) specific quality-of-care developments, and; 2) potential of STP candidates, without requiring prohibitive amounts of staff time.

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## 12.4 The design, implementation, and evaluation of national preceptorship training for therapeutic radiographers

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### Background

The Workforce Radiography Reform Programme (WRAP)<sup>1</sup> identified priorities and reform measures to strengthen workforce, with one workstream focussing on preceptorship, which embeds a culture to support and build practitioner confidence in newly-qualified staff and for those in transitioning roles. Additionally, national AHP workforce benchmarking data demonstrated inconsistency in accessibility and quality of preceptorship<sup>2</sup>.

Key stakeholders, including the NHS AHP preceptorship workforce lead, radiotherapy service managers, educators, newly-qualified staff and professional body members, were invited to form a national project team to provide steer, influence, and insight regarding preceptorship in Therapeutic Radiography.

The project aimed to improve standardisation and quality of preceptorship at a national level, by adopting a critical mass approach.

### Method

Online synchronous preceptorship training packages - for preceptorship champions and preceptors – were designed with alignment to NHS England Allied Health Professional (AHP) Preceptorship Standards<sup>2</sup>.

Radiotherapy departments were invited to access training remotely. Evaluation of participant experience followed training delivery.

### Results

Between March and December 2024, 50 preceptor champions (across 4 cohorts) and 53 preceptors (across 3 cohorts) attended the training.

Evaluation has captured participant progression in knowledge, skills, professional profiling, and an increase in radiotherapy departments' motivation and commitment to strengthen and sustain preceptorship initiatives.

### Conclusion

The project influences system level change to address local workforce issues in line with national policy recommendations. Development of a community of practice provides focus for national direction, support, and innovation for therapeutic radiographers as change agents within preceptorship. The training design provides a transferrable model for other AHP groups.

1 . The Society of Radiographers (2023) AHP Workforce Reform Programme: Outcomes & Next Steps. The Society of Radiographers. Available at: AHP Workforce Reform Programme: Outcomes & Next Steps | SOR ([www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org))

2. NHS England (2024) Allied Health Professional (AHP) Preceptorship Standards and Framework. NHS England Workforce, training and education. Available at: Allied Health Professional (AHP) Preceptorship Standards and Framework | NHS England | Workforce, training and education ([www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk))

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## 12.5 Evaluation of the BMUS Preceptorship and Capability Development Framework for sonographers: A realist approach

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### Background

In 2022, the British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS) launched their Preceptorship and Capability Development Framework, the first document of its kind for sonographers and an important professional milestone<sup>1</sup>. Since its publication, the impacts on practice have not been evaluated. To address this gap, a preliminary realist evaluation was conducted. Its aim was to advance our understanding of why the framework 'works' (or not), how, for whom, in what context, and to what extent.

### Method

As a preliminary realist enquiry, the central objective was to elicit initial programme theories (IPTs) about how the framework effects change (intended or otherwise) in different contexts. The IPTs were generated 'retroductively'. First, the incarnate theories embedded within the framework were inductively surfaced. Then, these were deductively tested in two semi-structured focus groups, comprising eight participants. Themes were surfaced using thematic analysis, from which IPTs emerged as 'context-mechanism-outcome' configurations (CMOCs).

### Results

In total, the analysis surfaced four core themes: 'structure', 'systems thinking', 'people', and 'benefits'. From these, thirty IPTs emerged in the form of CMOCs, capturing the causal pathways between contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes.

### Conclusion

This study advances the preceptorship agenda by evaluating the framework and offering valuable insights into its 'real world' functionality. The surfacing of IPTs as functional units (CMOCs) narrows the knowledge-to-practice gap; stakeholders can readily discern which outcomes are triggered in which circumstances, so can target their efforts accordingly. As such, the study has important implications for practice, as its design and outputs facilitate the development of holistic implementation strategies.

1. British Medical Ultrasound Society (2022) BMUS Preceptorship and Capability Development Framework for Sonographers. Available at: <https://www.bmus.org/mediacentre/news/bmus-preceptorship-and-capability-development-framework-for-sonographers/> (Accessed: 1 February 2025).

## 12.6 Preceptorship in Radiography: Cross-Sectional scoping of profession specific needs

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A recent report suggests that 17% of the radiography workforce leave within the first two years of service (Palmer, Rolewicz and Dodsworth, 2023). These figures align with the findings of the Society of Radiographers' Workforce Census for both diagnostic and therapeutic radiography (Society of Radiographers, 2022). Attrition amongst early-career stage radiographers not only places strain on clinical services but also does not deliver value from public investment into education. It has been highlighted that good quality structured support may enable retention of healthcare professionals as they commence their professional role (Health Education England, 2018; Harvey and Morris, 2020; Scholes et al, 2017). With the publication of the AHP Preceptorship Standards and Framework (NHS England, 2023) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC 2023) Preceptorship Principles, this scoping study was commissioned and funded by NHS England to establish diagnostic and therapeutic radiography profession specific needs.

### Method

Three online surveys were distributed across the four countries of the UK, with follow up focussed discussion groups being hosted following an initial analysis of these to delve deeper into the responses. Service Managers and practice educators, preceptors and newly qualified practitioners were specifically approached.

### Results:

33 service managers, 64 preceptors and 290 radiographers completed the surveys. 16 service manager /practice educators, 5 preceptor and 1 preceptee took part in focussed discussion groups.

### Conclusions

Professional clarity on preceptorship (what it is and what it is not), and the role of the preceptor (knowledges, skills behaviours) is required. The importance of protected time was emphasised.

1. Harvey-Lloyd, J. and Morris, J. (2020). Supporting Newly Qualified Diagnostic Radiographers: Are We Getting It Right? *International Journal of Practice-based Learning in Health and Social Care*. 8(2), 57-67.
2. HCPC (2023). Principles for preceptorship. Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/information/principles-for-preceptorship/>.
3. Health Education England (2018). RePAIR Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention Report.
4. Palmer, W., Rolewicz, L. and Dodsworth, E. (2023). Waste not, want not. Strategies to improve the supply of clinical staff to the NHS. Nuffield Trust.

5. NHS England (2023). Allied Health Professions (AHP) Preceptorship Standards and Framework. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/NHSE%20AHP%20Preceptroship%20standards%20and%20Framework.pdf>.
  6. Scholes, J., Petty, N.J., McIntosh, T., Green, A. and Flegg, M. (2017). Managing support for newly qualified practitioners: lessons learnt from one health care region in the UK. *Journal of Nursing Management*. 25(2), 102-109. doi: 10.1111/jonm.12446.
  7. Society of Radiographers (2022). Radiotherapy Radiographic Workforce Census 2022.
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