

Interim Report to College of Radiographers March 2008

Project title: Imaging services for children in England and Wales.

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Introduction

The Children's National Service Framework (2003, DoH) emphasised that health services should be child-centred to meet the needs of the child and access to these services should be available no matter where the child lives. This project is a follow-up study to a Scottish survey undertaken last year by the researchers. From a 76% response rate, replies indicated little specific provision for children in adult hospitals.

The main aims of the study are to

- i) establish the provision of imaging services for children in England and Wales
- ii) make recommendations for good practice in the imaging of children

Method

A questionnaire survey of adult hospitals in England and Wales with imaging facilities will be carried out. In addition all children's hospitals will be included in the study.

Work to date

Research Assistant: From 1 November 2007 a radiographer (HA) who was employed as a research assistant on the aforementioned Scottish survey was recruited as the research assistant. Due to other duties, HA was unable to take up post until 1 December 2007.

Ethics: Formal contact was made with NRES, submitting a summary of the project. The reply received stated 'we consider the study to be a survey and should not be managed as research. Therefore it does not require ethical review by a NHS Research Ethics Committee or approval from the NHS R&D office.'

Advisors: Two radiographers were sought to act as advisors to the researchers on issues relating to i) the NHS structure in England and Wales, ii) pertinent issues for inclusion in the questionnaire as these may differ from Scottish issues. A radiographer from each of England and Wales agreed to act as advisors.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires were adapted from those used previously for the Scottish survey. Separate questionnaires existed for both adult and children's hospitals. The input of our advisors resulted in re-wording of one question and one further question being added. Minor changes were made to reflect the different NHS structure in England and Wales. Both questionnaires contain 23 core questions with a further 2 questions (n=25) included for general hospitals only.

The main topics of the questionnaire relate to imaging of children in their hospital, relating to the working environment, procedures and policies, and staff and training.

It is a requirement of the Welsh Assembly that questionnaires sent to hospitals in Wales include a version written in Welsh. A contact has been found to carry this out and this will be done when the working of the questionnaire has been finalised (post pilot).

Questionnaires will be allocated a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality but enable non-respondents to be followed up. A pre-paid return envelope will be included. The Scottish survey offered the opportunity to respond electronically, as there was a poor uptake of this (<4%) it was decided to offer paper questionnaires only.

Participants: A database of hospitals within England and Wales has been established. Details of strategic health authorities (SHA) in England and regions within each of these were obtained from the Department of Health website. Each individual trust website was used to gather information of hospitals offering imaging facilities. Details of hospitals in Wales were obtained from the NHS website. A total of 428 questionnaires will be distributed to radiography managers or superintendents of adult and children's hospitals.

Work in Progress

Pilot: The questionnaire has been piloted in 5 Northern Irish hospitals. Unfortunately we have encountered difficulties with the Freepost return facility as provided by the University. Our pilot responses have been caught up in the back log of mail. We are assured this will be released within the next few days.

Database: A specific SPSS-PC database has been developed to facilitate data analysis of quantitative data from all questionnaires. The database from the Scottish study will be used , but with appropriate amendments as necessary.

Future plans

Distribution of questionnaires during the week beginning 14thApril, reminders to be sent as appropriate.

Translation of both questionnaires to Welsh (April 08)

Input of data to SPSS-PC database (April-May 08)

Responses to open ended questions will be analysed following familiarisation by identification of recurring themes, and their coding and clustering (May 08)

Production of final report to College of Radiographers and provide feedback to participating hospitals (June 08)

Prepare a paper for publication to include findings from both Scottish and English/Welsh surveys (June 08)