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## **Evaluating the clinical learning experiences of dyslexic student radiographers**

### **Abstract**

This study will explore the learning experiences of dyslexic student radiographers on clinical placement. Although it is a legal requirement to provide support and resources to dyslexic students, little attention has been given to the clinical requirements and the learning difficulties of dyslexic students on placement in the radiology department. Research in other healthcare professions, especially in nursing, has demonstrated some significant barriers and risks that dyslexic students have to overcome during their training. There is also evidence that identifies a lack of understanding and a 'stigma' that is associated with this learning difficulty. It is therefore important for patient safety and the radiography profession that the issues are explored in detail so that effective support and resources can be introduced. By asking for personal accounts from students, the specific problems and coping strategies can be highlighted.

### **Aim:**

To explore the experiences of dyslexic student radiographers on clinical placement.

### **Objectives:**

Discuss the potential impact of dyslexia on clinical practice.  
Identify what coping strategies may be used by dyslexic students.  
Identify the clinical support provided for dyslexic students.

### **Method**

A qualitative methodology will be used to investigate the opinions of a convenience sample of student radiographers. An on-line questionnaire will be made available to all the sample and this will be supported by ten semi-structured interviews. Ethical approval will be sought.

### **Area of research activity**

The voluntary sample will be taken from the population of students in England currently studying on an undergraduate radiography degree programme. This sample will include both students that have declared a specific learning difficulty and non-dyslexic students. Questionnaires will be completed anonymously on-line and ten respondents will be invited to discuss their views further by consenting to be interviewed. All the interviews will be conducted in the student's education centre, following relevant approvals.

### **Timetable**

The study will take place over an 18 month period. Commencing in September 2008 and finishing in March 2010.

### **Evaluation Strategy**

The data will be analysed using a traditional thematic approach (Burnard, 1999). The interview data will be transcribed verbatim and analysis will be supported by a qualitative data analysis tool (Max QDA). Findings will be displayed and the data will be discussed further against the existing body of literature.

### **Dissemination**

The findings will be presented at national radiography and dyslexia conferences. In addition, a paper will be published in a peer reviewed journal for dissemination to the wider population within the profession. It is hoped that this exploratory study will lead to further research to produce recommendations and ultimately lead to a resource for supporting dyslexic students in the clinical setting.

*Bibliography available on request.*