



The project team

- Martin Vosper (medical imaging) and Lynne Gordon (radiotherapy), The University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield
- Collaboration with two radiotherapy and three medical imaging departments
- Liaison with the local patient and public involvement group

The timeline

- The project was awarded funding from the College of Radiographers Industrial Partnership Scheme (CoRIPs) at the September 2011 round
- Currently applying for NHS ethics approval via the IRAS system
- Project findings to be presented at UKRC in June 2012

Why is the project necessary?

- Very few published studies have examined the personal "first hand" accounts of patients attending for radiotherapy and medical imaging procedures
 - In diagnostic imaging, these relate chiefly to women's experiences of mammography, highlighting instances of fear and perceived lack of knowledge.
 - In radiotherapy many focus on breast cancer patients.
- Existing explorations have largely been based on service quality audits
- There is a need to consider the voices of service users, in keeping with a "patient-led" NHS and in order to be responsive to care quality needs

Previous studies

- A Finnish questionnaire-based study of 135 radiotherapy patients (Siekkinen et al, 2008), noted that the patients' perceived quality scores relating to staff characteristics rated higher than the quality scores for the physical environment or the caring process

Previous studies

- An Australian qualitative study based on 34 patients receiving radiotherapy for breast cancer (Halkett and Kristjanson, 2007), showed that great importance was placed on receiving emotional comfort

"It was just come in, gown off, lie down, arm up there, measure, measure, measure, out of the room, boom, boom, boom."

"They were very friendly, they made you very comfortable, made you very much at home."

Previous studies

- Thind et al (2010), in a quantitative Californian study of a low income women with breast cancer, found that patients welcomed greater involvement in the treatment decision making process, high quality information and greater emotional support. Those women receiving radiotherapy reported greater satisfaction.

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Methodology and methods

- A qualitative, phenomenological study, examining the real life experiences and perceptions of patients
- Purposeful sampling in order to obtain a diverse sample of patients and procedures, across several departments
- Individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, following full explanation and consent
- Thematic analysis of emerging data

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Project aims and research questions

- The principal aim of the study is to explore patients' understandings and lived experiences of radiotherapy (pre-treatment and treatment) and diagnostic imaging procedures
- Primary research question – what are patients' experiences of radiotherapy (pre-treatment and treatment) or diagnostic imaging procedures?

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Secondary questions

1. Are patients' perceptions and experiences generally positive? If not, what steps may be taken by clinical departments and staff in order to enhance their positivity?
2. How is the diagnostic or therapeutic radiography environment perceived by patients? What factors promote fear and uncertainty or promote comfort and reassurance?

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Secondary questions

3. What are patients' prior conceptions of the nature and risks of diagnostic imaging or radiotherapy procedures? How do their subsequent lived experiences compare with this?
4. How does the type of procedure undertaken influence patients' understanding and experiences?
5. Do patients' clinical conditions and demographic status affect their views and experiences?

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The sample group

- At least 10 patients attending for radiotherapy procedures, at each of two centres – at least 20 in total. To include both palliative and curative localisation and treatment.
- At least 10 patients attending for medical imaging procedures, at each of three centres – at least 30 in total. To include MRI, CT, ultrasound, fluoroscopy, routine X-ray, mammography.

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The sample group - exclusions

- The study will exclude patients who:
 - have acute conditions or trauma
 - are under 18
 - have a reduced state of alertness
 - are emotionally upset
 - are not fluent in English



Possible perceptions?

Like a laboratory Communicative
 Reassuring High tech
 Cold Comforting
 Like a sanctuary Scary
 Life-saving Confusing



References

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Halkett, G, and Kristjanson, L. (2007). Patients' perspectives on the role of radiation therapists. *Patient Education and Counseling*; 69: 76-83

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Thind, A., Hoq, L., Diamant, A. & Maly, R. (2010) Satisfaction with care among low-income women with breast cancer. *Journal of Women's Health*;19 (1): 77-86.

