

## **Interim report to the College of radiographers-September 2018**

**Project title:**- What training in difficult news delivery do sonographers have and what impact do sonographers who regularly deliver difficult news think this has on their levels of wellbeing and burnout? (CoRIPS 129)

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### **Introduction**

Delivering difficult news to parents during a fetal ultrasound examination is a key aspect of an obstetric sonographer's role. This project aimed to understand how these experiences impact on sonographer burnout and wellbeing, and to identify which kinds of training may support sonographers with this aspect of care.

In particular, we investigated i) the type and level of training sonographers in the UK have received on delivering difficult news, ii) how useful they find this, iii) whether there is ongoing support for sonographers who are delivering difficult news in clinical practice, iv) whether delivering difficult news on a regular basis is associated with higher sonographer burnout and poorer wellbeing, and v) whether enhanced training and support may reduce sonographer burnout, improve wellbeing and enhance patient experience.

### **Method**

The project comprised of two phases:

The first phase involved an online survey which was advertised to UK sonographers and gathered information regarding sonographer experiences of difficult news delivery, training and wellbeing. We received ethical approval for the 1<sup>st</sup> phase on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 from the Faculty of Medicine Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds

This phase has been completed.

We received a total of 91 responses; of those that did state their gender, 86 identified themselves as female; 3 as male. The majority of respondents were diagnostic radiographers (79), a further 8 were midwives, 1 from medicine, 1 from life sciences and 1 therapy radiographer. One respondent did not state their profession.

The age of the respondents ranged from 25 years to 62 years with 1 to 37 years of experience since qualification as a sonographer. Qualifications included Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (32), Postgraduate Certificate (15), and Postgraduate Diploma (43); 1 respondent did not state their qualification. 10 of the respondents had gained a Master of Science in addition to their initial qualification.

The initial survey results were presented at the BMUS Obstetric Study day on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and following further analysis, we have now written a paper which was submitted to Ultrasound for publication on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

## **Work in progress**

We received ethical approval for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase on the 5th December 2017 from the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds. This phase has now been commenced and involves semi-structured qualitative phone interviews with a subset of respondents to the first phase. We have completed 10 interviews with participants and anticipated interviewing a further 3-5 respondents in the near future. These participants outlined their experiences of training and support they have received that enable them to cope with difficult news delivery experiences. The conversations are being transcribed and the team will performed qualitative analysis using a thematic approach.

## **Provisional dates for completion of project**

- Complete a further 3-5 telephone interviews by the end of October 2018
- Analysis of the transcribed data to answer the main project aims by January 2019
- Production of final report to the College of radiographers by February 2019
- Disseminate findings to interested participants February 2019
- Submit further paper to a peer reviewed journal March/April; 2019
- Submit abstract to BMUS conferences for wider dissemination September 2019 for presentation December 2019.

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018