

Case Study - Diagnostic Radiographer



I work as a Diagnostic Radiographer for a large teaching hospital in the National Health Service. The common perception of the role is that we take images in an x-ray department. This is true, but we also work in operating theatres and on hospital wards. As well as x-rays, some radiographers work on ultrasound examinations, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or nuclear medicine. Experienced staff may report on what the medical images mean, deliver intravenous injections and conduct internal examinations. Medical imaging departments are more and more frequently performing interventional procedures (mini surgery) guided by imaging such as biopsies, stenting of arteries, treating blood clots in the brain and other acute and emergency procedures. Radiographers may work in nearly all areas of a hospital and roles are also developing in community based centres.

The nature of the profession means we are bound by a number of pieces of legislation, including the **Darzi Report**, the **Health and Social Care Act 2008**, the **Data Protection Act 1998**, the **Mental Health Act 2007** (part of the **Equality Bill**), the **Human Rights Act 1998**, the **National Health Service Act 2006**, **Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999**, **Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000**, the **Health Professionals Council Code of Conduct** and guidance from the **Society of Radiographers** as our professional body.

As with any of the allied health profession roles, we are working with vulnerable members of the public and their welfare has to be at the forefront of what we do. In many cases we don't spend a lot of time with each patient, but we have to gain their trust to be able to carry out our role as part of their care team. We work closely in a team with other medical and health professional staff and it's vital that we share information and knowledge between us and with the patient. For this reason, radiographers must have the ability to prioritise their workload and know how to communicate effectively with both patients and other professionals.

Medical imaging techniques and equipment are developing at an astonishing rate and are at the forefront of medicine. Nearly all patients within the hospital and the community will at some point pass through a medical imaging department for a diagnostic test or intervention. For this reason, radiographers play a vital role in the care pathway of patients and medical imaging directly guides patient management and treatment.

Imaging has to be provided 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Diagnostic Radiographers will, therefore, have to work a variety of shift patterns and provide on-call cover from home in order to meet the demands of this highly dynamic and busy service.