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## **Student radiographers' role ideal and role reality**

Shelley Smart and Paul K. Miller

*Institute of Health, University of Cumbria, UK*

UK Imaging and Oncology Congress, Liverpool ACC, 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

### **Abstract**

**Background:** A Diagnostic Radiographer's role is recognised as dual in nature; to produce diagnostic images while meeting patients' holistic needs (Møller, 2016). Notwithstanding evidence suggesting both are of equal importance, the technical demands often take precedence in practical circumstances (Munn et al, 2014). The preference for a task-centred approach is attributed to role perception (role ideal) and the realities of the role experienced (role reality), and this begins prior to qualification (Hale and White, 2021). This study explores the role ideal and the role reality of student Radiographers.

**Method:** With ethical approval, N=6 semi-structured focus groups, with a mean number of 4 participants, were undertaken, two for each of the three-year groups from a single Diagnostic Radiography BSc (Hons) programme. Reflexive thematic analysis facilitated the identification of 6 themes.

**Results:** Evidence suggests the role ideal is formed early on in training; each academic year perceived the role to be a balance between technical and psychosocial duties. However, the role reality differed, as participants perceived their technical role to be more important. Analysis revealed six lower-order themes relating to matters that had impacted upon role ideal: departmental pressures and responsibilities, workplace dynamics, efficiency, student radiographers' and patients' characteristics. These informed three global themes describing the broader and intersecting domains of such impact: structural, cultural, and personal.

**Conclusion:** This study suggests the role reality devalues the psychosocial role, with specific barriers being identified. The barriers highlighted need to be addressed

through research, education, leadership, and recruitment in order achieve the role ideal.

## **References**

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