



Radiographers' commitment to continuing professional development: A single-centre evaluation



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to examine radiographers' commitment to continuing professional development (CPD), and to ascertain what types of activities are preferred so a model for provision of departmental activities could be developed.

Methods: An online survey was used to obtain information from all departmental radiographers regarding their commitment to CPD. Statistical analysis, using Spearman's Rho and Chi-Square test, was utilised to investigate any associations.

Results: All radiographers ($n = 57$) were invited via email. A response rate of 67% ($n = 38$) prevailed. Radiographers feel CPD is important and a positive correlation existed with feelings regarding compulsory CPD (r value = .718, P value = .001). Thirty-four percent had logged the SOR-recommended twelve or more pieces of CPD in the last 2 years. One to three hours a month is the preferred amount of own time radiographers are willing to dedicate. Negative correlations exist between the amount of own time radiographers are willing to commit to CPD activities and their feelings regarding compulsory CPD (r value = -.419, P value = .009), and HCPC audit (r value = -.509, P value .001).

Conclusion: Although radiographers recognise the importance of CPD many spend less than four hours of their own time a month on CPD. Departmental activities should be free, short lasting, lunchtime presentations with theory presentation that encourage interaction and discussion with inclusion of practical elements. Further research investigating the barriers that prevent radiographers from partaking in CPD and the causes for insufficient CPD records is recommended.

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Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a key construct of the competent health professional. CPD provides a structured framework by which improvements and progression can be attained, offering numerous benefits encompassing both the individual and the organisation¹ (Table 1). Undertaking CPD demonstrates continued competence whilst developing personal and professional effectiveness and increasing job satisfaction,² which in turn engenders worth and facilitates the advancement of the profession. By virtue of being registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), radiographers must comply with the HCPC's CPD standards. These standards ensure registrants continue to learn and develop throughout their career, keeping their skills and knowledge up to date thus allowing them to work safely,

legally and effectively.³ The importance of being able to maintain fitness to practice and the significance of life-long learning are tantamount to standard three of the HCPC's Standards of Proficiency.⁴ In the context of enhancing ones knowledge and skill set, the HCPC standards are integral to the development of a radiographer⁵ (Table 2).

While CPD is now considered a mandatory aspect of HCPC registration, it has been suggested that the impact of this policy has not had a significant impact on the attitudes of radiographers towards CPD activity.⁶ Given that the research published by Marshall et al.⁷ states that 95% of radiographers across Europe deem CPD to be important or very important, with 54% believing it to be very important, it can be established that radiographers do understand the positive impact of continued learning. In support of this, a more recent study reports that 63.4% of radiographers feel CPD should be compulsory, although almost half (48.5%) are not recording their CPD activities in a systematic way.⁶

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Table 1
The benefits of continued professional development.¹

Benefits to the individual	Benefits to the organisation
Builds confidence and credibility. Showcases your achievements. Useful for appraisals.	Maximises staff potential. Helps employees to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) objectives.
Achieve career goals by focussing on your training and development. Cope positively with change by constantly updating knowledge and skill.	Promotes staff development. Adds value; reflecting it will help staff to consciously apply learning to their role and the organisation's development.
Improve productivity and efficiency by reflecting on your learning and highlighting gaps in your knowledge and experience.	Linking to appraisals. Helps employees focus their achievements throughout the year.

Table 2
HCPC CPD standards for all registrants.⁵

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of CPD activities; 2. Demonstrate that CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice; 3. Seek to ensure that CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery; 4. Seek to ensure that CPD benefits the service user; and 5. Upon request, a written profile must be presented (which must be the registrants own work and be supported by evidence) explaining how the standards for CPD have been met.
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It is reported that in-house education is favoured most,⁸ though the prominence of the internet with endless image libraries, searchable journal databases, online videos and e-learning modules has transformed the way in which radiographers can undertake CPD activities. CPD should have some emphasis on multidisciplinary working and learning activities that focus on the relevance to, and the impact on, practice.⁹ Yet, a number of questions regarding multidisciplinary education and teamwork have been raised surrounding whom? What? When? And how?¹⁰ This accentuates the need for local level consensus when determining the optimal approach for multidisciplinary education in order to provide the ideal learning experience.

Previous research suggests that radiographers need to develop their abilities to reflect on practice in order to maximise learning from practice.¹¹ As such, a rigorous self-directed approach to CPD would be necessary to achieve this. Autonomous radiographers' possess different individual learning styles, but they are generally strong in perceiving information and can actively process experiences in a concrete manner.¹¹ Utilising these qualities should ensure that the benefits of experiential learning are embedded sufficiently to ensure learning and understanding. Whilst CPD provides an individual with opportunity to enhance their knowledge and improve service provision, it is recognised in nursing that the effects of positive change are hindered by personal enthusiasm and motivation, peer attitudes and lack of support following CPD.¹² If radiographers cannot overcome these types of issues then realising the benefits of CPD will be difficult to achieve.

There are many challenges and barriers to carrying out CPD and learning activities which radiographers may encounter. It is interesting to note that Castle et al.² report a number of factors regarding CPD provision that can be considered as being prominent issues in radiographers' commitment to CPD today. Concerns reported can be thought of as external and internal barriers to the individual that one may or may not have any control over, including provision and support, funding, commitment, curriculum, access and age.² Yet, given these barriers European radiographers reportedly manage to devote six to ten hours a month to CPD.⁷

Overcoming and dealing with barriers effectively is vital for a radiographer to maintain their fitness to practice. Conversely, it

could be argued that health facility environments should provide suitable CPD activities or opportunities to help the workforce overcome these barriers. If protected CPD study time is provided, the radiographer should demonstrate that study time was used appropriately by providing evidence that agreed learning and development objectives were met.¹³ Support is available for members of the Society and College of Radiographers' (SCOR) through provision of a range of CPD opportunities, a set of CPD standards to adhere to and by providing an online personal portfolio CPD template,¹³ which integrates the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and the HCPC requirements. However, critical comments regarding the SCOR CPD structure do exist with some suggesting it is 'confusing', 'reductionist' and 'woolly', but this is recognised as a possible lack of clarity relative to the purpose and value of CPD.⁶ The optional online portfolio, CPD Now, provides accreditation to those radiographers who have fulfilled the SCOR CPD standard consisting of; twelve pieces of CPD recorded in CPD Now, carried out over a 2-year period that encompasses at least six CPD Now framework outcomes.¹³ Accreditation certifies that a radiographer will be ready for audit and outlines an individual's commitment to CPD.

The purpose of this paper is to examine radiographers' commitment to CPD in the radiology department at a district general NHS hospital in England. The aims of this study were to highlight the types of CPD activities performed; to determine if the uptake of CPD is affected by the radiographer's age, position held or qualification, to evaluate what radiographers feel is the best type of CPD activity, and to recommend a model for provision of CPD that radiographers will find most beneficial. It is acknowledged that these results provide only a small snapshot of one NHS radiology department and the results must be interpreted as such.

Study design and method

This was a single-centre, exploratory investigation using an online survey host,¹⁴ designed to examine radiographers' commitment to CPD in a district general NHS hospital in England. A review of the relevant literature was undertaken to ascertain the

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