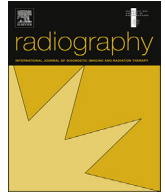




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Radiography

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/radi

A qualitative study of perceptions of professionalism amongst radiography students

V. Challen ^{a, *}, Z. Siinalaanelaid ^b, T. Kukkes ^{b, c}

^a University of Cumbria, Lancaster, LA1 3JD, UK

^b Tartu Health Care College, Nooruse 5, 50411, Tartu, Estonia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 August 2016

Received in revised form

20 October 2016

Accepted 21 October 2016

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Radiographer
Professionalism
Perception
Student

ABSTRACT

Purpose: To explore perceptions of professionalism amongst Estonian radiography students in order to identify their understandings of professionalism, the factors that influence the development of their understandings and those skills required to achieve professionalism.

Methods: A qualitative study using a semi-structured focus group approach involved four main questions: 1. What does the word professionalism mean to you? 2. What does the word unprofessionalism mean to you? 3. What has influenced your understanding of professionalism? 4. What is your current understanding of what you need to become a professional? Prior to the study, first year students had no radiology clinical placement experience unlike third year students. Interviews with first years (n = 7) and third years (n = 10) were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic content analysis was employed to classify student responses resulting in a number of subthemes related to general skills, specific skills, personal characteristics and the impacts of educational environments.

Results: Four main themes were explored: 1) characteristic features of professionalism; 2) common manifestations of unprofessional conduct; 3) factors influencing the development of professionalism; 4) developmental needs for the achievement of professionalism. Sub-themes emerged related to three groups of influencing factors i.e. theoretical studies, clinical training and personal characteristics. An influencing factor may have a positive effect or a negative effect dependent on the nature of any particular factor.

Conclusions: Awareness of student perceptions enables educators and clinical staff to assure the content and organisation of theoretical studies and clinical placements to facilitate the impact of positive factors and minimise the negative factors.

© 2016 The College of Radiographers. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

It is only since the turn of the 21st century that professionalism in medical and healthcare professions has been discussed extensively partially due to concerns over reported unethical, illegal and unprofessional physician behaviour in the USA¹ as well as high profile cases in the UK² and elsewhere.³ The recognition that concepts of medical professionalism have to evolve in tune with the collaborative nature of modern healthcare, involving all healthcare professions (including radiography), has led to the notion of “professionalism in modern healthcare” as the prevailing trope.⁴

Students being novice radiographers undergo ethical enculturation⁵ into the profession through a variety of experiences in different educational environments to gain an understanding of

professional expectations. Their perceptions of professionalism and the factors influencing their professional development are related, to some extent, to their own personality and attitudes.^{6,7}

Professionalism is now an integral part of the radiography curriculum in many countries although research on radiography student perceptions of professionalism and the factors influencing their perception development has been limited. For this reason, it was felt timely to explore the perceptions of professionalism amongst radiography students in Estonia. To achieve the determined study, four objectives were specified for exploration: perceptions regarding the nature of professionalism; perceptions of unprofessionalism; the development of professionalism; perceptions regarding student developmental needs.

Literature review

Professionalism can be thought of as a belief system or an ideology although it is not well defined either ‘methodologically or

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: val.challen@cumbria.ac.uk (V. Challen), siinalaanelaid@nooruse.ee (Z. Siinalaanelaid), tiinakukkes@nooruse.ee (T. Kukkes).

^c Responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole.

conceptually¹⁰ because of the “*numerous complexities, connotations and nuances*”¹³ associated with the term.^{7,8,9,10} No amount of discussions has made a definition of professionalism clear to all professions^{4,11,12} including the allied health professions (AHPs).⁷ While the word is used extensively in diverse situations, as Swick notes ‘*it is easy to recognise but difficult to define*’.¹³

Studies and reports of perceptions of professionalism by non medical staff found that interpretations of professionalism encompassed many and varied aspects of behaviour, communication and appearance.^{7,14,15} The research study by the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) on professionalism found that the participants, educators as well as students, perceived professionalism as both a holistic concept linked to good clinical practice and a set of specific appropriate behaviours. It also identified professionalism not as an absolute but constructed in the interaction of individual and context.⁷ Context dependency has been seen to affect individuals’ perceptions of professionalism.^{11,16,17} This understanding of contextual variables is reinforced by a number of research studies involving AHPs.^{7,18,19}

Whiting notes that within the radiography profession the perception of professionalism has been seen as a multi-dimensional concept that embodies the unification of personal attributes and behaviours requiring obligations and commitments to the patient, the healthcare system, the practice discipline and society.^{20,6}

Professionalism can be seen to be a curricular necessity in healthcare educational programmes not least, according to Sullivan & Tiessen, to develop students’ ‘dynamic reflexive abilities’.¹⁹ Professionalism is a difficult concept for students to understand and should be taught²¹ not only explicitly but also implicitly as it has been identified that taught sessions alone cannot convey all its various nuances.^{22,23} In the academic environment during the teaching of professionalism, students will note any differences in the attitudes and behaviours of staff and assess any discordance between the content and its delivery.^{24,25} This applies even more so in the clinical situation where students, attempting to identify with the practising staff, soon become aware of a range of behaviours which may challenge their perceptions.^{12,26} Particularly in the medical profession, role modelling plays an important part in developing professional behaviour and in students’ perceptions of professionalism.^{27–29} Cruess & Cruess identified it is negative role modelling and not positive as often having more of an impact on student behaviour³⁰ which may ultimately hinder the individual’s professionalism development.³¹ Role modelling can shape a student’s future as a radiographer³² especially in relation to students’ patient-centred values.³³

Methods

This study focuses on the Tartu Health Care College radiography students’ perceptions of professionalism. The population of the country, mainly Estonian, speak the official language Estonian with a very large community speaking Russian. For 15 years, Estonian radiography education and training has been at the level of professional higher education with Estonian being the language of instruction in all higher education institutions (HEIs). Different components of professionalism are present in various subjects and modules of the radiography programme but the understanding of professionalism acquired by students within the study process is unclear.

A qualitative study was chosen to explore first and third year radiography students’ perceptions of professionalism using focus groups. A qualitative study was deemed appropriate as it is able to explore and attempt to disclose poorly understood phenomena.^{34,35} The qualitative paradigm approach is discovery-oriented and as

well as being descriptive enables the exploration of attitudes, beliefs and preferences through the research participants’ own personal perspectives^{36,37} thus allowing for authenticity. Focus groups have been used widely in the field of radiography and radiation therapy.^{38,39} The focus group approach for this survey was influenced by the UK’s HCPC research on professionalism⁷ where the choice of data collection had the capacity to explore beliefs as well as perceptions.

As the research involved perceptions of only present student radiographers, purposive sampling was used. To enable comparison of different experiences, first year students had only a placement in an intensive care unit whereas third year students had had a number of clinical placements in various radiology departments of mainly public institutions.

All first and third year radiography students were asked to participate in the study; voluntary participation and the importance of student role in the curriculum were explained. Students therefore were offered an opportunity to provide their contribution to curriculum development. A group of first year students comprised 7 participants (32% of first year student population), and a group of third year students comprised 10 participants (45% of third year student population). Both sample groups comprised students of different ages, gender and nationality; with 2 mature students in the first year group.

A semi-structured interview scheme was compiled based on the study carried out by the HCPC,⁷ providing four main questions: In relation to the radiographer’s profession, 1. What does the word professionalism mean to you? 2. What does the word unprofessionalism mean to you? 3. What has influenced your understanding of professionalism? 4. What is your current understanding of what you need to learn to become professional? Student responses to the four questions provided four broad themes related to the perceptions of professionalism: 1) characteristics of professionalism, 2) common manifestations of unprofessionalism, 3) factors influencing the development of professionalism, and 4) student developmental needs in regard to professionalism.

The interviews with first and third year students, lasting for 70 and 74 min respectively, were recorded and transcribed verbatim by researcher 3. Thematic content analysis was carried out by researcher 2 and researcher 3 independently. In the event of differences, discussions were carried out to reach consensus. To categorise the student responses to the four posed questions, a grounded approach was used as the concept of professionalism. In relation to themes 1, 3 and 4 similar sub-themes emerged (specific skills, general skills, personal features). The sub-themes that emerged in relation to the factors influencing the development of professionalism perceptions involved the impact of theoretical studies, clinical placement/clinical environment and personal features.

Prior to the study, participants were explained both verbally and in writing the voluntary nature of their participation, the anonymous use of the study results and the right to discontinue their participation at any time without explanation.

The study protocol was approved by the College Board of Applied Research and the Research Ethics Committee of the University (236/T-27) prior to data collection.

Results and discussion

In this study, there was no attempt or requirement of the students to define professionalism, so the presumption was that student perceptions came from their knowledge and understanding of the concept through taught theoretical sessions in the college environment, from their own personal perspectives, and beliefs and through the observation of the attitudes and behaviours of others.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5579346>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5579346>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)