

PATIENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THERAPY RADIOGRAPHERS

Background

The aim of the study was to inform the development and standardisation of RTT undergraduate training across the EU by:

- determining the characteristics/skills which ensure person-centred care;
- assessing patient perceptions of their engagement with RTTs in the clinical department; and
- identifying potential areas for development of the undergraduate therapeutic radiography curriculum.

Methodology

- Systematic review of literature on patient perceptions of RTTs
- Radiotherapy patient survey completed in-person or on-line investigating aspects of care/experience.
- Semi-structured interviews with patient volunteers to explore their experience in more depth.
- Analysis of survey responses comparing perception of care with patient characteristics
- Thematic analysis using a 'Grounded Theory' approach and NVivo software.

Results

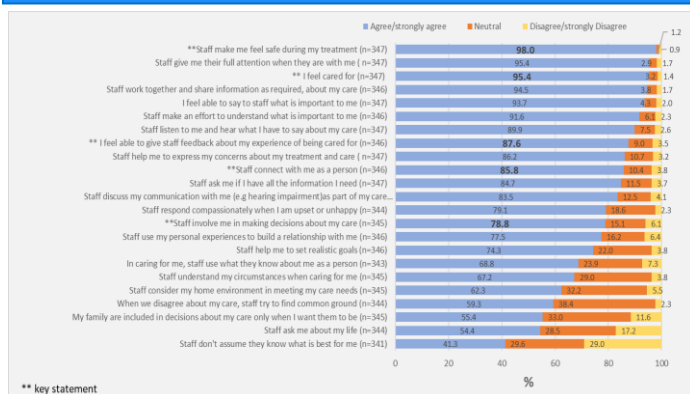


Figure 1 Summary of patient responses to survey (key statements results in bold type)

- 13 papers included in the review.
- 347 surveys completed and 48 interviews.
- Statistically significant differences in patients' perceptions of RTTs exist depending on gender, diagnosis, country and time spent with RTT, in relation to key aspects of care.
- Agreement with key statements ranged from 78.8% for being involved in decision making, to 98% for feeling safe (see Figure 1).
- RTTs being fully attentive and understanding were the most important aspects relating to overall experience of RTTs.

- Patients who reported having more time with RTTs had a more positive perception of their care
- Person-centred communication and continuity of RTT delivering therapy are highly valued by patients

Conclusions

- The majority of patients report a positive perception of care provided by RTTs.
- This can have a positive impact on patient experience emotionally, psychologically and physically.
- Patients' relationship with RTTs is influenced by: time spent; continuity of care; person-centredness of communication; and the radiotherapy environment.
- Patients' perceptions of RTTs can be a strong predictor for overall satisfaction in radiotherapy.
- Improvement in person-centred care and involving patients in decision making is needed.

Recommendations

RTT Curriculum advanced communication/ interpersonal skills, patient psychology, emotional intelligence, qualitative research and survey design.

RTT Research opportunities

- Perspectives of specific cancer patient groups of RTTs.
- Specific patient survey tool.
- Cancer specific studies.
- RT environment/models of working that facilitate more person-centred care (quality time and continuity of care).