

## PATIENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THERAPY RADIOGRAPHERS

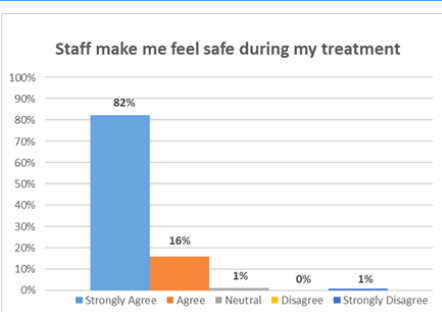
Therapeutic radiographers/Radiation therapists (RTTs) are professionals who plan and deliver radiotherapy and support patients throughout their treatment. The education and training they undertake is highly specialised but it can vary across Europe. We investigated patients' perceptions of RTTs to help inform the development and standardisation of education and training for RTTs across Europe. Researchers from Portugal, Poland, Malta and the UK worked together on this study.

### What did we do?

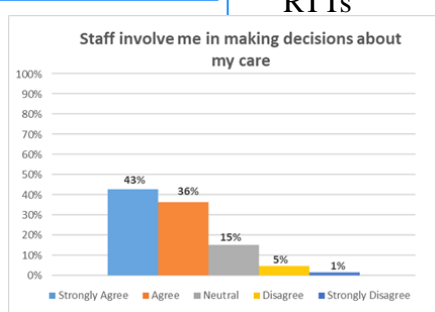
- A systematic review - We reviewed existing research evidence on patients' perceptions of RTTs
- Surveyed patients - We invited patients who were receiving radiotherapy or who had received radiotherapy within the previous 2 years to complete a survey regarding their experience. 347 surveys were completed.
- Interviewed patients - Patients who completed the survey were invited to participate in an interview about their experience. 48 patients were interviewed.
- Data analysis - We analysed all the information and data gathered from the review, the survey and interviews.

### What did we find?

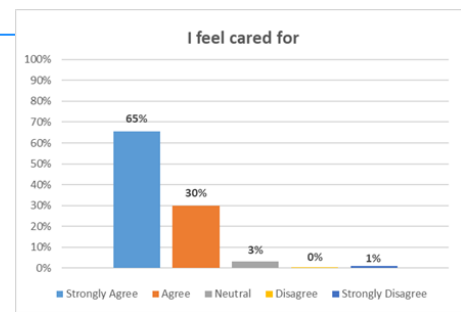
- Our review, survey (See figure 1) and interviews found that most patients report positive experiences in relation to RTTs.
- Patients' perceptions of RTTs can be a strong predictor for overall satisfaction in radiotherapy
- Increased time with RTTs is associated with a more positive experience. Being rushed increases anxiety and feelings of mistrust.
- Consistency of RTTs delivering treatment is important and valued by patients.
- Communication needs to be individualised and RTTs should encourage patients to ask questions and express concerns
- Highly technical environment can negatively influence patients' experience/perception of RTTs



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 1 (a) statement with most agreement (b) statement with least agreement (c) statement indicating overall agreement

## What are our recommendations?

### RTT Education

- Advanced communication/interpersonal skills, health psychology and emotional intelligence
- Research methods training for measuring patient experience
- **RTT Future Research**
- Development of more research regarding patients' perceptions of RTTs to understand patients' needs.
- Design and validation of specific surveys for use in radiotherapy.
- Exploration of methods to adapt/enhance the radiotherapy environment to improve patients' experience.
- Exploration of alternative ways of working to enable RTTs to provide more person-centred care