

ADDRESSING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE IN MEDICAL IMAGING

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN TOTAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”

Lao Tzu

ABSTRACT

When presenting to an imaging department, the person who is to be imaged is often in a vulnerable state and out of their comfort zone. It is the role of the radiographer to produce a high quality image and facilitate patient care throughout the imaging process. However, often the radiographer's primary focus is the technology, rather than the patient. This dissertation addresses the patient experience in medical imaging and radiographer practice change, with a particular focus in the MRI setting, through the conduct of two systematic reviews (one quantitative and one qualitative) and an action research project.

The qualitative systematic review was conducted to explore how patients experienced medical imaging. The findings of the review highlight the diverse, unique and challenging ways in which people experience imaging with MRI and CT scanners. It was recommended from the review that all health professionals involved in imaging need to be aware of the different ways each patient may experience imaging, and provide them with ongoing support and information.

The quantitative systematic review was conducted to assess interventions to reduce anxiety, claustrophobia, sedation and non-completions and improve satisfaction for patients undergoing medical imaging. Open MRI, newer MRI scanners, quieter machines, information in combination with psychological support or an anxiety reduction protocol, mock MRI, team training, prone scanning, AV systems, cognitive behavioural therapies, guided imagery, fragrance administration, patient positioning devices and paediatric preparation booklets were all found to have some positive effect on at least one outcome, whilst the findings for additional information were mixed. It was recommended from the review that interventions that can improve the patient experience (by reducing anxiety, claustrophobia etc) should be considered by health professionals involved in the medical imaging process.

An action research project was initiated to implement the findings of these two systematic reviews into practice. During the course of this project, issues unique to the imaging department were identified and therefore the aim of the research broadened to include these as well. Through a process of engagement, discussion and reflection, the following changes were able to be achieved: improvements in patient satisfaction and anxiety, an increased focus on patient care by the staff, and changes in departmental practice. From the results of this research, a model for practice change in a medical imaging department and a model detailing the patient experience of medical imaging are proposed.

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY AND STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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