



### Jesse Clarijs – de Jong

Jesse Clarijs - de Jong works as a specialised senior radiographer (specialisation quality management) at Holland Proton Therapy Centre. After studying radiography, Jesse finished his Applied Sciences specialisation in Quality Management. When he started working Holland PTC was still in the development phase. Jesse is driven by a passion to provide patients the best care they can. He is a member of the EFRS RT Committee and the board of the Dutch benchmarking association PRISMA-RT.



### Ricardo Khine

Professor Ricardo Khine has over 22 years' experience as a Therapeutic Radiographer, with 13 years in academia. He has experience and certification from the UK, the US and Australia. He currently holds a strategic leadership position as Head of School: Health and Social Care Professions at Buckinghamshire New University, UK. He is also an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Radiotherapy & Oncology at City, University of London, UK. In 2017, he was awarded a PhD in Radiography from City, University of London; his research topic focused on the perceived impact of the consultant therapeutic radiographer role in clinical practice.



## Leading the way: The EFRS' efforts to improve patient safety across Europe through radiographers

By Jesse Clarijs-de Jong, Holland and Ricardo Khine, United Kingdom

### Introduction

The European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS) represents, promotes and develops the radiography profession within Europe and across all radiography specialisations. With 45 national/professional bodies as members and 66 academic institutions that deliver radiography education also as members the EFRS actively supports over 105,000 radiographers and 8,500 radiography students.<sup>4</sup>

Radiographers play a crucial role within medical imaging, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy. Radiographers combine their interpersonal and technical skills to work together with patients and (ever evolving) medical technology. Central to the role is effective communication skills and an understanding of the importance of patient care and safety aspects. The EFRS publishes a number of statements, research publications and delivers webinars to further develop the profession and to build a stronger culture surrounding patient safety within the radiographers' practice all across Europe.

### Patient safety and radiography professions' development

Developments in medical technology for radiographers in all fields have changed the way patient care is delivered. These developments contribute to increase the efficiency in healthcare services, but also provide more effective and less invasive procedures for patients. To understand the impact of these developments' further collaboration between professional societies and educational institutions is required. In response to the urgency the EFRS

published a white paper containing a set of consensus statements exploring the future role and requirements for the radiography profession over the next 10-15 years grouped in categories education, research and practice.<sup>4</sup>

The technical (r)evolution taking place demands the educational institutions to be proactive and to adapt accordingly. Even more so, looking into the coming decade. As educational institutions are educating radiographers to play a vital role between patients and technology, the curricula will need to be developed to focus on the importance of patient care and safety. Educational institutions should provide skills for life-long learning, the use of technology and develop postgraduate education to prepare future radiographers to embrace the evolving technology. [4] Thus, preventing compromises to patient safety by enhancing adaptive learning skills and science-based practice of new radiographers.

Within 10-15 years a research culture will be embedded into clinical departments with patients as partners. This partnership will ensure research is effectively developed, led by radiographers and includes the patients' perspective (for instance on priorities, projects, methods and design). The technical (r)evolution will allow radiographers to lead on vital research to assess safety aspects, quality of care of the patient and be valuable to the members of public.<sup>4</sup>

Looking ahead, continuous professional development and adaptation of skills and procedures within the radiographers' practice is of utmost importance. Each procedure must be optimised to maximise

benefit and minimise risk to the patient and the public. From the fundamental role radiographers play within each patient's individual pathway it will increasingly be expected of the radiographer to holistically tailor procedures to the patient.<sup>4</sup>

### Continuous Professional Development

Radiographers have the responsibility for patient care during examinations and treatment and need to assure safe practice and a high level of quality of care to the patient. As the continuous change and technological advancements in radiography can potentially result in gaps between 'best practice' and 'actual practice', it is crucial that healthcare professionals continuously build upon the knowledge and skills gained during their undergraduate education.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge and skills attained by healthcare professionals during their undergraduate education provides the foundation for their career, but it will be insufficient to fully support them throughout their career. This emphasises the need for continuous professional development (CPD), especially in radiography due to significant technological developments far greater than many other professions.<sup>1</sup>

The EFRS defines CPD as 'the continuous learning process required to maintain, develop and improve one's knowledge, skills and competences to work effectively and safely'.<sup>1</sup> CPD can be viewed as a holistic philosophy with a broad focus, acknowledging the multifaceted nature or professional practice and emphasizing the importance of personal and professional development.

Patient safety is featured throughout the radiographer's journeys through education, practice and research. CPD is essential to ensure patients receive safe care of high quality from competent professionals<sup>1</sup> today and in the future. Outputs generated by the EFRS cover topics on education, research and professional practice.

The EFRS promotes the importance of continuous learning for radiographers by providing webinars and statement documents, by encouraging radiographers to lead on research projects and inspire radiographers to promote and engage in research within their profession. The EFRS webinars and documents cover a wide variety of subjects, for example:

- Webinar series on incident cases, promoting the implementation of incident learning systems across European nations;
- A webinar on Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) within research and innovation projects;
- EFRS statement on the importance of the patient engagement and the patient voice within the radiographic practice.

### Importance of patient involvement in radiography

The EFRS recommends the involvement of patients in education, practice and research in radiography. The patient voice and engagement is beneficial to all aspects in radiography and is important in supporting delivering a high quality health care.<sup>1</sup> An engaged patient does not only help chart their own health course, they also play an important role shaping decisions made at every point in the healthcare process. [2] Thus, patient involvement can significantly improve patient safety.

Acknowledging the value of patient involvement in radiography, the EFRS has developed clear recommendations for patient engagement and including the patient voice within service delivery and innovation, education and radiographer-led research.<sup>2</sup> These recommendations are also further extended into radiotherapy-specific recommendations on patient involvement in process (re)design, decision making, safety management and radiographer education.<sup>2</sup> Where appropriate the EFRS will also actively consider the patient voice within its strategy and activity plan.<sup>2</sup>

### Patient Voice and Patient Engagement – an hot topic for the major stakeholders

In line with the World Health Organisation global strategy on integrated people-centred health services 2016-2026, and consider the patient care, and moreover, the patient-centred care, as one of the major pillars in the future for the healthcare professionals, Radiographers won't be aside from this topic.

Both EFRS PPC Awards 3rd edition (as the first two editions) and Elsevier Radiography Journal (EFRS official Journal) with a Special issue, will play a key role in the Patient Voice and Patient Engagement, enhancing the role of Radiographers, either on diagnostic and therapy.

Since 2021, the EFRS patient-centred care awards has recognised, celebrated and promoted the work of radiographers in improving care through a patient-centred approach. The care improve can also include quality and safety. This year's winner of the Patient-Centred Care Award 2022 was Rad Chat, the first therapeutic radiographer led oncology podcast. Entries for the Patient-Centred Care Award 2023 can be submitted in the beginning of 2023. Deadlines and openings will be communicated through the EFRS website and platforms.

From the point of view of Radiography' Editors "patient voice and patient experience are of growing importance to the radiography profession to ensure medical imaging, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy services meet service user's needs".<sup>5</sup> In addition "listening to the patient voice and gathering feedback about patient experience provides valuable insights into how radiography service delivery and educational provision should be structured"<sup>5</sup>, leading this topic to a special issue and a specific call for nominations, which will end by December 5, 2022.

### References

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