



## Expert Practice, The Advanced Practitioner and Me

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### How Many Hats?

In 2010 I specialised in Radiotherapy Information and Support, firstly supporting breast cancer patients and now head and neck cancer patients. As I have progressed and developed within this arena I have become an expert in a number of areas and have to ask myself which hat am I wearing today? Maintaining autonomy and staying within ones scope of practice is an essential element that I have to maintain and must adhere to at all times whilst covering the advanced practice key areas of: role extension, expert practice, service development, education, training and development (2)(3). This poster aims to illustrate the many hats that I wear and the affiliation to Advanced Practice

### Expert Practice

Embarking on the Expert Practice module was standard practice for becoming an Information & Support Radiographer as this incorporated Radiographer led review. I really had no comprehension or could have anticipated how in depth it would be or for the impact that it would have on me professionally. I suddenly became aware of the role of the Advanced practitioner and potential impact this could make to my career and the care that I provide as I applied myself to the model of skill acquisition (1)

### Head & Neck Information and Support Radiographer

This is the main aspect of my role. As an expert practitioner in this area I support all head and neck cancer patients undergoing chemo/radiotherapy and act as a key member on the MDT. I provide side effect management and psychological support to the patients and their families and act as the contact post treatment. This enables me to motivate and empower patients to move into the survivorship phase; an area I have developed extensive experience in, through my work with Macmillan, the late effects clinic, associated courses and academic modules I have undertaken. I have also been involved with the Macmillan Head and Neck Cancer Pathways Redesign and identified the need for service development. Here I have utilised my clinical expertise and service development skills to successfully implement a new 2 week post treatment combined Allied Health professional clinic where with the help of the dietetic and speech and Language team we offer side effect support and discuss long term oral and self care.

### Radiographer Led review

Currently I review all breast, prostate and Lung CHART patients during treatment. Electronic holistic needs assessments are carried out on each patient to ensure that all patients are seen as a whole and care plans are produced accordingly.

This area of role extension and expert practice enables me to utilise other skills such as discussing late side effects of radiotherapy, consequences of treatment and outline the key principles of survivorship and self management.

### Skills Acquired and Other duties

Other duties include the day to day management of the information and support helpline and general support for patients and treatment radiographers, management of on treatment clinics, radiotherapy open evenings, children's information days, update on medications and new product reviews.

Practising within the scope of an advanced practitioner and the skills learnt from studying the MSc in Advanced practice has enabled me to develop my skill set which I use in everyday clinical practice. These include: Simple lymphatic drainage massage, exercise prescription, Sexual dysfunction, Mindfulness, Pain management, Fatigue management, Level 2 psychology, Management of Gastrointestinal disease Nutritional Care, Motivational Interviewing Consent of the Patient, Advanced Communication and research skills which play a major part when reading literature regarding the introduction of possible new medications and medical devices.





### Academia

Once I had completed the expert practice module I found myself wanting to embark on other modules that would help to underpin my knowledge and ultimately improve my clinical practice. I find that I use the skills learnt in every module in everyday practice and I really feel that this has empowered me to achieve what I have to date and provided the motivation to carry on.

I am just about to embark on my dissertation— looking at Identifying the late effects of radiotherapy treatment on Prostate Cancer Patients and the need for such consequences to be highlighted during the follow up pathway. This is something that I had always said that I could never do as I really felt that I didn't have the skills to do so. The support that I have had from the tutors at SHU have provided me with that confidence and motivation to do so. I really feel proud that I can now achieve this personal goal, whilst at the same time, providing a worthwhile contribution to the local service, positively impacting on patient care within the survivorship arena.



### Nottingham Radiotherapy Late Effects Clinic

This unique self referral 3 year pilot service has been a challenging development which has involved gaining training, developing pathways, research, education to patients, primary and secondary care on the consequences of cancer treatment. To date over 100 patients have been reviewed and the data shows that no other intervention in this complex group of patients has ever shown such an improvement in quality of life.

This service was developed by myself and another radiographer and has encompassed expert practice with service development.

Education of health professionals and GP's has been a key aspect of this project along with attending primary care learning events, patient focus groups and support groups to raise the awareness and provide much needed

education on the consequences of radiotherapy treatment.

In January 2016 this service won the Quality Care Award in the long term conditions category and we have been shortlisted for a 2016 Macmillan Excellence Award.



### HOPE Course Facilitator

In conjunction with Macmillan I have introduced and run the HOPE course which is available to all patients at the end of active treatment. HOPE is a group based, interactive self management course for cancer survivors which has been accredited by Coventry university. Many patient's express that they have found attending the course life changing and a real positive experience.

### Conclusion

An advanced practitioner role encompasses considerable depth and breadth of radiographic practice. Expert clinical practice is demonstrated throughout my key roles in association with other functions including service development, team leadership and education.

The MSC in Advanced Practice highlights and develops ones skills which then enhance such service development and impact on clinical practice.

My ever-changing and expanding role not only enhances my professional development but also raises the awareness and enhances the skills of the radiotherapy information and support team which ultimately has a positive impact on patient care and the service that we offer.



### References

1. Benner P. From novice to expert. 1984. Addison-Wesley, Menlo Park.
2. Eddy A. Advanced practice for therapy radiographers— a discussion paper. 2006. Radiography. 1-8.
3. Education and professional development strategy: new directions. <http://SOR.ORG> . Last accessed 28/08/2016.