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Information wranglers and system coaxers: A qualitative interview study of radiologists' experiences of reporting dementia imaging

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Abstract

Background: Neuroimaging forms a core component in the routine assessment and diagnosis of dementia. Demand for MRI and CT for these purposes continues to rise with the aging population. Novel treatments for Alzheimer's type dementia may put further strain on these resources in the future. Little previous research has aimed to explore the experiences of radiologists in reporting these scans.

Method: A qualitative interview-based study with five consultant radiologists who were sampled using a purposive non-probability method was undertaken. Interviews were recorded using MS Teams and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was used to analyse the interviews and derive themes (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Analysis was organised using Qualitative Data Analysis Software NVivo 12 (2017).

Results: From the RTA, four key themes were developed. (a) When undertaking dementia imaging the radiologists work is understood as involving the management of professional interfaces between specialists and technology. The demarcation of this is set by differing knowledge, language and priorities. (b) Radiologists' role as 'wrangling' information; including interrogating, transforming and communicating, often ambiguous, information. (c) Radiologists' work involves 'coaxing' a strained and sometimes recalcitrant system to meet their and their patient's needs. Lastly, (d) the place of dementia imaging in a radiologist's work was articulated as small and precarious.

Conclusion: This study describes a complex and contested place of dementia imaging within a radiologist's wider work. It points to a potential need for more sustained development of resources for this important radiological task.

References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2019) "Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis," *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), pp. 589–597.

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