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Radiographers' Professional Competence - development of a context-specific instrument RCS

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The overall aim of this thesis was to explore and describe radiographers' professional competence based on patients' and radiographers' experiences and to develop a context-specific instrument to assess the level and frequency of use of radiographers' professional competence.

Method: The data collection methods comprised interviews (Studies I-II) and questionnaires (Studies III-IV). The subjects were patients in study I (n=17) and radiographers in studies II-IV. Studies III and IV were based on a national cross-sectional survey of 406 randomly selected radiographers. Study III consisted of two phases; designing the Radiographer Competence Scale (RCS) and evaluation of its psychometric properties. A 42-item questionnaire was developed and validated by a pilot test (n=16) resulting in the addition of 12 items. Thus the final RCS comprised a 54-item questionnaire, which after psychometric tests was reduced to 28 items. In study IV, the 28-item questionnaire served as data. The level of competencies was rated on a 10-point scale, while their use was rated on a six-point scale.

Results: In study I, the female patients' comprehensive understanding was expressed as feelings of vulnerability. The encounters were described as empowering, empathetic, mechanical and neglectful, depending on the radiographers' skills and attitudes. Study II revealed two main areas of professional competence, direct patient-related and indirect patient-related. In study III the analysis condensed the 54-item questionnaire in two steps, firstly by removing 12 items and secondly a further 14 items, resulting in the final 28-item RCS questionnaire. Several factor analyses were performed and a two factor-solution emerged, labelled; "Nurse initiated care" and "Technical and radiographic processes". The psychometric tests had good construct validity and homogeneity. The result of study IV demonstrated that most competencies in the RCS received high ratings both in terms of level and frequency of use.