

Responsibilities of the Radiographer in Non –accidental Injury

Sherril Spencer, Associate Professor, Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, **Kingston University and St Georges University of London** and Education, Training and Research Officer, **International Association of Forensic Radiographers (IAFR)**.

The primary objective of the presentation will be to outline the radiographers' responsibilities in producing and presenting evidence in non-accidental imaging from a United Kingdom perspective. Images produced and the signed record form part of the *significant evidential documents* (Handcock et al 1997). It is for this reason that the radiographer must be aware of the child protection procedures that are in place along with knowledge of how to produce and present evidence in order to ensure safety and protection of the child. The aim is to outline a UK protocol and promote the Society of Radiographers' and the Association of Forensic Radiographers' stance on promoting the development, understanding and adherence to protocols and policies for forensic investigations (SoR and AFR, 2014).

The introduction will define the importance of establishing a protocol which is essential in risk management; the benefit of which is compliance (with legal and regulatory aspects), assurance, decision making and effective operation (Hopkin, 2012). Compliance refers to risk management activities (e.g. a protocol) designed to ensure that the organisation complies with legal and regulatory obligations of producing evidence (Hopkin, 2012). It offers assurance that we are doing all we can to avoid risk of non-compliance, provides a decision making tree to minimise errors and promotes effective operation of the imaging process and production and presentation of the evidence. Initially the UK regulatory and legal obligations of non-accidental injury imaging will be specified with a 'typical' non-accidental injury UK imaging protocol presented. The imaging processes and the responsibilities of the radiographer during the process will be discussed (SCoR, 2013; HCPC, 2008; RCR/RCPCH 2008; SCoR 2005). These include personal and professional issues, authorised referrers, consent, imaging protocols, confidentiality and health and safety along with, the actions and decision making in the event of concerns. Particular reference will be made to continuity of evidence incorporating the management of digital images as evidence (Davis & Reeves, 2004; SCoR and AFR, 2014). Finally, the requirements for acting as an expert witness will be outlined (GMC, 2013).

The final 10 minutes will be left open for questions and contributions from the audience of variations in practice and legal obligations internationally. The sharing of knowledge may inform the review of radiography protocols on producing and presenting evidence in non-accidental injury through inter-professional liaison and communication.

References

- Davis. M and Reeves. P (2004) Maintaining the chain of evidence in child abuse cases. *Journal of Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging* 5(2) 61-68
- GMC (2013) Acting as a Witness in Legal Proceedings. Available at: http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/21188.asp
- Handcock.V., Sudberry. J., Eaton. C. & Hogg. P (1997) Child Protection and Radiography: Social and emotional context. *Child Abuse Review* 6, 283-290
- HCPC (2008) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. London: Health Care Professions Council.
- Hopkin. P (2012) Fundamentals of Risk Management; Understanding, Evaluating and Implementing effective Risk Management. London: Kogan Page
- SCoR (2005) The Child and the Law: the Roles and Responsibilities of the Radiographer. London: Society and College of Radiographers.
- SCoR (2013) Code of Professional Conduct. London: Society and College of Radiographers
- SCoR and AFR (2014) Guidance for Radiographers providing Forensic Radiography Services. London: Society and college of Radiographers and Association of Forensic Radiographers. Available at: <http://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/guidance-radiographers-providing-forensic-radiography-services>
- RCR/RCPCH (2008) Standards for Radiological Investigations of Suspected Non-accidental Injury. London: Royal College of Radiologists/Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health.