

Radiation therapists' perspectives about barriers to continuing education in medical dosimetry

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the traditional route to becoming a medical dosimetrist has been to complete on-the-job training (OJT) with the option to sit for the Medical Dosimetry Certification Board exam (MDCB). In 2017, the MDCB changed the requirements to include a minimum of a bachelor's degree and graduation from an accredited medical dosimetry program. With the elimination of OJT, radiation therapists intending to continue formal education in medical dosimetry while working were impacted. Previous studies have predicted that a considerable and continual increase in medical dosimetry graduates will be needed to keep pace with the growing demand. The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to pursuing an education in medical dosimetry from the perspectives of radiation therapists. A Qualtrics survey was created to support the 2 research questions guiding this study. The survey was distributed via email to 10,000 radiation therapy students and registered radiation therapists who hold membership with the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT). A total of 650 responses were received, giving a response rate of 6.5%. Fifteen percent of respondents identified that the most significant external barrier was the lack of flexibility in school enrollment status (part-time options). Nineteen percent of the respondents identified that the most significant internal barrier was the perception of the level of difficulty of medical dosimetry education.

Keywords: medical dosimetrist, radiation therapist, external barrier, internal barrier, education