

Learning from experience in radiology



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Learning from Experience C. S. Lewis once said, " Experience: that most brutal of teacher. But you learn, my God do you learn. " I agree with Lewis because everyone can pick up a book, read a few pages and say that I have learned. But only few can state that I have learned from an experience. Luckily, I was given the opportunity to become one of those who have learned from experience by observing a technologist. While observing, I was able to gain knowledge that I never thought I would achieve. Through this paper, I will share all my observations and personal thoughts on the things I learned.

My observation took place at Ransom Memorial Hospital on January 6, 2012 from 8am to 12pm. My experience at the hospital was very informative. I got to observe many different procedures, though mostly were skeletal. The one procedure that was most performed was the chest x-ray which included seeing chest, lungs, heart, large arteries, ribs, and diaphragm. Therefore, I got a very good description of how the examination was performed. Other procedures I observed were two knee exams, two of hands, one specifically for the fingers, facial bones and one fluoroscopic procedure called video swallow.

My favorite procedure was the video swallow because in this procedure the patient was asked to drink and eat various types of food mixed with barium to see for any choking or swallowing problem. As the food was swallowed it would appear on a fluoroscope. Therefore, it was very interested to actually see the food being chewed and swallowed down. Seeing the examination provided clarity to me when I was confused on how it would be performed. This procedure also involved a speech therapist thus I got to interact with

her and learn more specifically about she can also play a role in the radiologic technology field.

I also learned about the duties of the technologist. A radiographer is responsible for operating x-ray equipment and processing exposed images, positioning patients for diagnostic examinations. They also calculate proper exposure factors to achieve optimum radiographic image quality with minimum exposure to the patient and then evaluate the diagnostic quality of the radiograph. Technologists assist the radiologist during specific procedures and lastly and most importantly they assist the patients while in his or her care because the patient is the most important person in the hospital.

When assisting the patient, the radiographers have to make sure they provide radiation safety not only for the patient but also for themselves. There are many different methods to providing safety. With the equipment and radiation dosage, highest KVp and the lowest mAs is used to provide the minimum amount of dosage required for the procedure. Furthermore, safety can be provided by reducing the amount of time in radiation area, by putting as much distance between you and the radiation source as possible.

When performing a portable examination stand at least six feet from x-ray source and wear a lead apron. The patient should remove any jewelry or metal accessories that may interfere with radiation procedure and both the technologist and the patient needs to wear protective lead shields for example lead gloves, aprons, skirts and thyroid shields to protect the other body parts from the radiation. It is advised to also always wear monitoring

device at collar level. Lastly, the technologist uses immobilization devices to hold the patients when needed.

After reviewing the duties, the physical requirements observed and radiation safety methods, I believe I do have the physical capabilities to perform those tasks on a routine basis. When I was observing, I didn't feel at all as if this is different than what I expected. I enjoyed learning about the ways procedures can be performed, interacting with the not only the technologist but also the patient. Overall, I don't have any concerns about working as a technologist because it's a field that occurs you to be alert and on your feet and I know that I possess those qualities.

Reading the Sections 1 & 2 of clinical manual also helped me understand the program and my responsibilities as a student better. I do agree to abide by these policies. And I know I will be able to carry out these responsibilities with no difficulties. In overall, my time at Ransom Memorial Hospital was a very valuable learning experience. I got a total different sense of how this medical field works. I got to see how to deal with patients, how exams were performed, learn about the equipment used, etc.

Not only did I learn how a typical day goes a technologist, but I also learned about the morals and responsibilities that they behold. In reality, there is no typical day because every day will be different from the other. Some days might go smoothly others days might not, but in all, one thing that a technologist needs to remember is that you are providing care for someone and what you do reflects not only yourself but also the people who work with

or for. Now I can fully say that I am a person who had learned from experience, not just books.