

Criterion 8.16: Each provider has qualified medical radiation technologists (MRTs)

Elements

8.16.1 MRTs require skills that will make mammography an acceptable experience for women by minimising anxiety at all stages of the screening pathway.

8.16.2 The MRT has two main areas of responsibility:

- provision of an acceptable screening experience for women who participate in BSA
- the provision of medical images of high quality to ensure the detection of small cancers – the detection of such cancers will demonstrate the benefits of screening mammography for women.

8.16.3 All MRTs performing screening mammography within BSA must be trained and qualified as MRTs. They must be registered with the Medical Radiation Technologist Board and hold a current annual practising certificate. All MRTs must also have completed a Post Graduate Certificate or a Clinical Competence in Mammography (New Zealand Institute of Medical Radiation Technology – NZIMRT), or a recognised equivalent within two years of commencing employment with the programme. Any overseas mammography qualifications must be endorsed by the Lead MRT UDG and BSA clinical leader.

8.16.4 To assist in maintaining the necessary skill level and expertise, MRTs should:

- remain up to date with advances in clinical practice and mammography techniques
- be conversant with current methods of early detection and treatment of breast disease.

These should be achieved by regular attendance (no less than one every three years) at validated update courses, conferences or seminars. These may be regional, national or international and it is desirable that one event contain a clinical component. Within each screening centre, ongoing education must occur through regular in-house study programmes, journal reviews and peer teaching sessions.

All continuing education should be of a quality that would enable it to be included in the continuing professional development programme (CPD) endorsed by NZIMRT.

8.16.5 All new MRT staff requiring training will be supervised by an MRT who holds a mammography qualification recognised by NZIMRT. Mentoring of the MRT in training must occur until the level of competency reached enables the MRT to function with a technical reject rate of less than 3%. Staff under training must progressively become involved in all relevant aspects of the screening programme as their competency levels develop.

8.16.6 MRTs must complete a minimum of eight hours' training in digital mammography.

8.16.7 All MRTs performing screening mammograms in BSA must assess each examination using the mammographic image quality (MIQ) classification criteria. These MIQ classification criteria are to be used in all training situations and whenever conducting peer review. Images that fall into the inadequate category are to be recorded as such. While these may be recorded as rejects, there may be instances when they are retained if they assist in the comprehensiveness of an examination.

- 8.16.8 All MRTs participate in peer review of images monthly. The Lead MRT may determine the times and method used. However, the peer review process must utilise the MIQ criteria and must support the Lead MRT's responsibility to maintain overall image quality.
- 8.16.9 All MRTs involved in BSA (except Lead MRTs) must be performing no less than 1000 mammograms per year, or 80 per month, or working 0.4 FTE within BSA.
- 8.16.10 All MRTs working in either fixed or mobile sites are to attend a minimum of three assessment clinics and three clinical multidisciplinary meetings per year.
- 8.16.11 All MRTs must attend regular sessions (at least monthly) reviewing images for technical quality.