

Sustainability in medical imaging and radiotherapy education and practice: a survey of the student perspectives in a Portuguese Allied Health School

Jose Miguel Saude, Porto / Portugal

Author Block: J. M. Saude, N. Adubeiro, L. Nogueira, I. Ribeiro, A. Xavier, C. Carvalhais; Porto/PT

Purpose: Higher education institutions play an important role as they prepare the professionals, decision-makers, and democratic citizens of the future. In Allied Health education, it is crucial to develop a professional that, in addition to the technical and clinical content, also have a critical sense regarding environmental and social aspects. This study aims to survey medical imaging and radiotherapy (MIR) students' perceptions and knowledge about environmental sustainability in MIR education and practice.

Methods or Background: A cross-sectional study was carried out, using a self-designed questionnaire, partially adapted and translated to Portuguese from previous studies. The final version of the questionnaire, after a pilot test, included twenty-six questions and was distributed amongst MIR bachelor's degree students attending 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th academic years in September and October of 2024.

Results or Findings: A total of 175 students participated in the study. Results showed that almost everyone believes they possess general knowledge about Sustainability, however 23,0% demonstrate a lack of awareness about the negative impact that clinical practice has on the environment. Data also revealed that students considered there is a need for more teaching about sustainability in the course (49,0%). In general, participants demonstrated little

knowledge about sustainable practices in the profession (34,0%), although, in daily life reported high adoption of sustainable practices (85,0%). Strong connection between their course and SDGs 3 (91,4%), 4 (53,7%), and 8 (38,8%), was reported.

Conclusion: Our findings revealed that there is room for curricula adjustments. Early exposure to sustainability concepts has the potential to promote the development of environmentally conscious professionals. By integrating sustainability into their education will potentially increase the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions that can reduce the negative environmental impacts of clinical practices.

Limitations: No limitations were identified.

Funding for this study: No funding was received for this study.

Has your study been approved by an ethics committee? Not applicable

Ethics committee - additional information: The study is educational and received a favourable statement from the institutional Data Protection Officer.