
Critical Thinking Exercise – Radiologic Technician - Communication

Scenario: A 60 year-old female is scheduled for a CT scan of her abdomen with IV contrast dye. The RT goes into the crowded waiting room with a cup of contrast to give her to drink prior to the procedure. The patient asks to speak with the RT in a more private place. The RT says that she is very busy and hands her the contrast. The patient quietly, but firmly tells her that the procedure is very specific in that it is focused on the adrenal glands and not the gastro-intestinal system. She further states that both her physician and the radiologist have agreed that the contrast drink is unnecessary. The RT is very annoyed at the patient's *refusal* and repeats that contrast is routine and that the procedure is a waste of time without it. The patient requests that the RT contact the ordering physician. The RT is even more annoyed now and leaves the waiting room, saying... "Well, we just won't get a good picture and you'll have to go through it all over again." The patient asks again that her physician be contacted to clear up this confusion. The RT talks with the radiologist who checks his notes and says that contrast is unnecessary.

Directions: Using critical thinking standards and skills, analyze the situation and answer the questions. Be sure to include the affective dispositions in your answers as well as cognitive skills.

What are the issues here?

What are the possible reasons for the patient's *refusal*? What do you think of the term *refusal* in this scenario?

What are the possible gaps in the data on which the decision to give the contrast was made?

What could have been done to minimize the difficult situation?

Are there any legal implications in the situation?

How could the situation been handled more appropriately?

Instructor’s Guide-Critical Thinking Exercise – Radiologic Technician - Communication

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Directions: Using critical thinking standards and skills, analyze the situation and answer the questions. Be sure to include the affective dispositions in your answers as well as cognitive skills.

What are the issues here?

- *The RT is following routine and is trying to stay on time*
- *The patient is informed and knows what is required in the procedure to be done*
- *The RT is not used to patients disagreeing with her*

What are the possible reasons for the patient’s *refusal*? What do you think of the term *refusal* in this scenario?

- *The reason for the patient’s refusal is that she knows it is not required for her procedure*
- *“Refusal” is a value-laden term that implies an uncooperative patient. It is suggested that the facilitator open dialogue around this subject.*

What are the possible gaps in the data on which the decision to give the contrast was made?

- *The radiologic technician is following general procedure for the examination.*
- *The radiologist has not communicated the specificity of this procedure to the technician.*

What could have been done to minimize the difficult situation?

- *The team in the department could have communicated the specificity of the procedure*
- *The contrast could have been offered in a more private place*
- *The RT should have responded politely and should have taken the patient to a more private place for the interaction.*

Are there any legal implications in the situation?

- *Not in this case, as no damage was done.*
- *The potential for legal implications exists when the health care worker insists on following routine when the patient clearly states that in her case, it is not appropriate.*

How could the situation been handled more appropriately?

- *Have students role play the situation as it happened in the scenario*
- *Have students role play the situation as it should have happened*