



**Heather Holmes** has completed this personal reflection on **16/07/2020**

**Paper:** Spring 2020 CPD questions

**Personal Reflection:**

Spring 2020 SVT Newsletter Questions ,À Work related musculoskeletal disorders in sonographers

These two papers highlight the importance of considering and implementing techniques to minimise the risk of injury among sonographers. With 90% of sonographers reporting problems, this has huge potential to impact our department and myself personally.

As a department, we have a duty to provide appropriate equipment, manage scheduling and staffing and encourage good working practices. We are fortunate in our department to have all the recommended equipment, including specifically designed rooms, fully adjustable couch and seating, and very ergonomic ultrasound machines which are easily movable with very variable positioning. It is therefore important that we make use of this as sonographers. We endeavour to schedule appointments with a reasonable timeframe to allow for optimising room positioning and patient positioning and keep lists variable so as to avoid repetitive forms of examinations. However, even with the best intentions, we are often a very busy department, sometimes understaffed, and this is when optimising is likely to be overlooked. It is also sometimes necessary to scan patients at their bedside where optimisation can be virtually impossible. There are also certain factors which are beyond our control but will affect the ability to work safely including advancing age of staff and increase in numbers of obese patients.

For me personally, these papers have highlighted the need for me to take personal responsibility for making best use of the adaptable equipment we have and ensuring I take time to look after myself during my work duties. It is all too easy to overlook this when you are pushed for time. There are several tips within the paper which I will take away and try to implement. These include getting the patient to move so they are in a better position of me. I often don,À do this as I am concerned it might not be the most comfortable for the patient, but usually patients are very willing to help if they can. I will also try asking patients to self-augment for venous scans, by asking them to flex/extend their foot to augment flow. This will help to prevent the twisting and reaching required to augment flow by compressing the calf muscles.

It has also prompted me to reconsider the position I scan patients in. Although not as adept with my left hand, certain scans I can perform with my left hand, so it might be good to work on this as it will provide me with alternatives to help vary my positioning during the day (for example, scanning carotid patients from behind their head, rather than to their side). The papers particularly highlight the dangers of over abducting the arm, or over reaching, so I will be more conscious of this whilst I am scanning.

I will also ensure that these papers are shared with my colleagues. In our busy environment it

is easy to forget to look after our bodies, but this will serve as an important reminder.