



Information Update

Sharing data to enhance your knowledge of the PA profession.

Number of Visits to Physician Assistants for Select Disorders in 2002

Overview

Table 1 presents the AAPA Division of Data Services and Statistics' estimates of the total number of visits made to PAs for each of 25 major types of disorders in 2002.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Visits to PAs in 2002

AIDS/HIV-Related Problems	1,368,064
Allergic Disorders	13,285,770
Alzheimer's Disease	2,445,866
Asthma	9,255,146
Cancer	5,080,210
Congestive Heart Failure	6,407,302
Contraception	6,433,734
COPD	7,380,323
Depression/Anxiety Disorders	10,585,237
Dermatitis/Skin Disorders	10,606,043
Diabetes	10,887,559
Dyslipidemia	9,445,600
Erectile Dysfunction	2,496,745
Gastrointestinal Disorders & Infections	10,483,081
Gynecological Disorders & Infections	8,249,525
Headache (including Migraine)	8,592,287
Hypertension	12,945,733
Musculoskeletal Disorders/Injuries	16,305,072
Obesity Management	4,566,826
Osteoporosis	4,057,228
Overactive Bladder	2,943,782
Pain Management	11,463,915
Respiratory/ENT Infections	16,961,666
Sleep Disorders	3,560,503
Urinary Infections	8,242,718

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Methodology

As part of the 2002 AAPA Market Research Survey (MRS) performed at AAPA's 30th Annual Physician Assistant Conference in May 2002, we asked a convenience sample of about 2500 PAs to estimate the number of visits made to them in a typical week for each of 25 disorders/conditions/services. The specialty distribution of the respondents to the 2002 MRS is, however, slightly different from the distribution estimated for all PAs in clinical practice. Since specialty is likely to correspond with the number of visits made for particular disorders, we weighted the MRS data to adjust for this difference when estimating the number of visits made to all PAs for each of the 25 disorders during the year.

In summary, to generate estimates of the total number of visits to all PAs for each disorder, we performed the following calculations, which are described in greater detail below:

- Calculated the Means --First, we calculated the mean number of patient visits for each disorder that were made to a PA working in each major specialty in a typical week.
 2. Determined the Annual Total for Each Major Specialty --Next we multiplied the mean visits per week by the estimated total number of weeks worked per year by the PAs in each major specialty group.
 3. Estimated the Overall Total --Finally, we summed the totals estimated for each major specialty group.

Note: We adjusted for the specialty distribution of the MRS respondents and confirmed that the work status distribution (percent full-time) observed for the MRS respondents was comparable to the distribution estimated for the total population of clinically practicing PAs. Still, to develop our estimates we have to accept one untestable assumption: the practices of the self-selected MRS respondents in each major specialty group were comparable to those of other PAs in that major specialty group.

Determining the Means

To determine the mean number of visits made to a PA in each major specialty group during a typical week for each disorder, we needed to prepare the MRS data on the number of visits per week, as they were not collected as continuous data. Instead they were collected in the following categories:

a = 0 visits	e = 4 visits	i = 11-15 visits
b = 1 visit	f = 5-6 visits	j = 16-20 visits
c = 2 visits	g = 7-8 visits	k = > 20 visits
d = 3 visits	h = 9-10 visits	

The specific preparations involved converting the responses of those individuals who cited a category representing other than a single number into a point estimate. Specifically, to the respondents who cited one of the finite categories, we assigned the midpoint of the range represented by the category selected. Similarly, to the respondents who cited the final unbounded category representing "21 or more patients", we assigned the value of 21. Following the recoding of data, we produced a simple mean for the number of patients treated for each disorder by each of the 14 major specialty groups of PAs.

Calculating the Annual Total for Each Specialty

To estimate the total number of visits made to PAs in each major specialty group during the year for each disorder, we multiplied the mean number of visits per week by the total number of weeks worked by the PAs practicing each specialty. The total number of work weeks for each specialty was projected to equal the weighted average of two estimates: one for new graduates, whom we assumed worked on average 24 weeks per year, and one for other graduates whom we assumed worked 48 weeks per year. Table 2 presents our estimates of the total number of clinically practicing PAs (on a full or part-time basis, new graduates and other PAs) in each of the 14 major specialty groups in 2002. The process used in producing these estimates is discussed in detail in the AAPA Information Update titled: *Projected Number of PAs in Clinical Practice as of January 1, 2003*.

Table 2. Estimated Number of Clinically Practicing PAs by Specialty as of January 1, 2003

All Specialties	46,002
Family Practice	15,996
General Internal Medicine	4,319
Internal Medicine Cardiology	1,237
Internal Medicine Other	2,862
Obstetrics/Gynecology	1,307
Emergency Medicine	5,286
General Pediatrics	1,373
Pediatric Subspecialty	777
General Surgery	896
Surgery CVT	1,304
Surgery Orthopedic	2,770
Surgery Other	2,276
Occupational Medicine	1,442
Other	4,157

Estimating the Overall Total

By summing the estimates produced for the 14 major specialty groups, we estimated the total number of visits made to PAs for each disorder in 2002.

Findings

Table 1 presents our estimates of the total number of visits made to all clinically practicing PAs for the 25 disorders during 2002. Estimates of the number of visits made to the PAs in each major specialty group for each of the disorders during 2002 is shown in Table 3.

Limitations

These estimates should be used cautiously as the data are limited in a number of ways. First and foremost, the information representing the number of visits for each disorder per week was not collected as continuous data. The use of midpoints to recode the responses associated with the categories representing finite ranges probably overestimates the number of visits for any disorder; conversely, the use of minimum values to recode the responses associated with the unbounded category underestimates the number of visits for any disorder. It is impossible to gauge the net effect of these two procedures on the estimates. In addition, it is impossible to know how the seasonal prevalence of some disorders affected the respondents' weekly projections made in May.

Table 3. Number of Patients Treated for Select Disorders in 2002 by Major Specialty Group*

Disorder	Family Practice	Internal Medicine General	Internal Medicine Cardiology	Internal Medicine Other	Ob/Gyn	Emergency Medicine	Pediatrics General	Pediatric Subspecialties
AIDS/HIV-Related Problems	164,426	286,095	14,754	293,009	44,912	314,001	15,082	7,049
Allergic Disorders	7,466,884	1,511,159	60,284	311,981	99,084	1,781,038	195,725	454,690
Alzheimer's Disease	736,120	555,744	69,359	178,124	7,408	498,107	8,664	12,689
Asthma	4,332,640	1,050,143	92,133	297,517	78,711	1,930,141	117,572	383,843
Cancer	928,959	485,087	63,201	605,128	93,528	582,446	26,051	7,754
Congestive heart Failure	1,918,485	862,523	758,703	355,195	12,964	1,270,415	43,533	3,525
Contraception	4,144,618	445,102	12,131	64,285	932,960	419,170	27,422	36,305
COPD	2,994,879	1,228,373	281,973	397,354	26,854	1,402,964	88,715	2,115
Depression / Anxiety Disorders	5,395,681	1,474,223	119,019	558,375	264,840	1,176,648	111,402	73,667
Dermatitis / Skin Disorders	4,998,230	1,246,990	67,738	398,460	120,845	1,476,392	189,212	359,170
Diabetes	4,936,214	1,777,858	406,753	679,824	155,108	1,270,985	105,918	39,124
Dyslipidemia	4,923,923	1,553,685	759,403	491,687	41,671	473,809	118,601	20,091
Erectile dysfunction	1,155,100	375,774	76,489	191,261	5,556	230,618	21,486	705
Gastrointestinal Disorders & Infections	4,228,023	1,274,743	125,429	929,501	97,810	1,922,452	141,909	307,356
Gynecological Disorders & Infections	4,137,498	602,906	34,355	166,047	1,129,493	1,548,750	59,882	53,576
Headache (Including Migraine)	3,849,527	945,799	92,694	368,322	153,256	1,704,243	126,842	147,334
Hypertention	6,074,484	2,047,120	781,833	711,915	149,044	1,274,889	185,143	19,386
Musculoskeletal Disorders/Injuries	6,028,535	1,540,958	96,768	468,680	67,834	3,075,248	886,382	222,410
Obesity Management	2,286,573	735,361	225,902	223,669	151,403	212,237	84,323	109,267
Osteoporosis	1,585,850	636,237	70,165	321,916	243,079	221,508	38,813	-
Overactive Bladder	1,237,897	508,427	42,130	144,196	195,852	250,423	17,674	6,345
Pain Management	3,465,930	1,174,930	89,838	710,721	171,638	2,036,845	371,569	31,997
Respiratory/ENT Infections	9,312,360	1,833,988	142,977	547,021	111,447	2,907,740	203,266	555,497
Sleep Disorders	1,529,637	555,829	85,255	369,588	46,084	259,076	40,295	35,600
Urinary Infections	3,750,388	970,955	56,395	321,291	420,411	1,633,477	92,892	124,775

Disorder	Surgery General	Surgery CVT	Surgery Orthopedics	Surgery Other	Occupational Medicine	Other	All Specialties
AIDS/HIV-Related Problems	42,929	21,300	9,856	9,097	19,237	126,315	1,368,064
Allergic Disorders	240,111	36,865	42,009	19,589	134,849	931,503	13,285,770
Alzheimer's Disease	5,093	18,635	54,914	15,082	24,853	261,074	2,445,866
Asthma	220,029	50,363	141,880	16,815	83,915	459,443	9,255,146
Cancer	39,291	460,758	220,383	40,179	461,694	1,065,753	5,080,210
Congestive heart Failure	44,020	89,529	746,966	17,861	51,742	231,841	6,407,302
Contraception	101,111	7,802	66,930	3,152	33,610	139,135	6,433,734
COPD	47,043	81,540	407,988	22,238	75,007	323,280	7,380,323
Depression / Anxiety Disorders	116,417	56,260	147,388	40,139	105,725	945,452	10,585,237
Dermatitis / Skin Disorders	205,953	104,923	113,923	41,012	115,542	1,167,653	10,606,043
Diabetes	71,861	147,092	558,937	84,770	128,818	524,295	10,887,559
Dyslipidemia	43,293	71,947	578,001	22,687	62,916	283,887	9,445,600
Erectile dysfunction	10,742	23,901	45,569	2,094	118,044	239,407	2,496,745
Gastrointestinal Disorders & Infections	207,434	476,850	131,077	29,243	122,552	488,700	10,483,081
Gynecological Disorders & Infections	91,493	98,728	17,692	21,989	61,891	225,225	8,249,525
Headache (Including Migraine)	95,074	32,004	135,399	38,173	196,740	706,882	8,592,287
Hypertention	55,563	133,502	794,616	86,443	119,584	512,211	12,945,733
Musculoskeletal Disorders/Injuries	185,621	147,092	158,137	1,968,596	383,757	1,075,053	16,305,072
Obesity Management	66,940	87,098	104,187	95,958	59,327	124,580	4,566,826
Osteoporosis	16,371	28,313	47,178	445,154	53,079	349,565	4,057,228
Overactive Bladder	34,198	26,737	80,663	21,259	151,731	226,249	2,943,782
Pain Management	109,937	287,460	585,993	817,637	417,955	1,191,464	11,463,915
Respiratory/ENT Infections	325,214	70,222	159,165	21,568	174,015	597,185	16,961,666
Sleep Disorders	49,801	27,480	64,115	20,137	69,276	408,330	3,560,503
Urinary Infections	104,458	74,529	140,616	28,833	165,150	358,548	8,242,718

* PAs are assigned to the specialty in which they spend the most time providing clinical services for their primary employer. Note, some PAs practice multiple specialties and roughly 20% hold multiple clinical jobs.