

Job Satisfaction

Marvelle K; Kraditor K. Do PAs in clinical practice find their work satisfying? *J Am Acad Phys Assist* 1999 Nov; 12(11):43, 44, 47.

Few PAs — 17% of those eligible to practice — have left the profession or chosen another career. One hypothesis is that PAs are satisfied with their profession and their work. To test this hypothesis, the AAPA conducted a survey of the professional satisfaction of AAPA members in clinical practice, collecting data using the 1998 AAPA member opinion survey that had been mailed to 17,336 PAs. Usable responses were received from 12,766 (73.6%) members in clinical practice. Measured were satisfaction with work environment, satisfaction with clinical practice, satisfaction with job, impression of the job market, and outlook on the profession. By all measures, PAs are highly satisfied with their choice of career and job. When respondents were asked to rate all aspects of their job taken together, 90% responded excellent (31%) or good (59%). Ninety percent said that they would definitely (47%) or probably (43%) become a PA if they were starting a career today.

Byers VL; Mays MZ; Mark DD. Provider satisfaction in army primary care clinics. *Mil Med* 1999 Feb;164(2):132-5.

Abstract: The job satisfaction of physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants was assessed during the course of a multicenter study of Army primary care clinics. All providers in nine clinics at three medical centers who were engaged in adult or family care were invited to participate in the study. Questionnaires on job satisfaction and other practice style variables were completed by 26 physicians, 19 nurse practitioners, and 13 physician assistants (46, 76, and 41% of eligible providers, respectively). Analysis revealed a broad range of job satisfaction in the sample. However, average levels of job satisfaction were not significantly different across the three groups of primary care providers. Autonomy and collaboration were significant predictors of job satisfaction. It is clear that changes in health care systems that reduce, or appear to reduce, the primary care provider's autonomy in clinical matters are likely to reduce provider satisfaction as well.

Krochalk PC. Survey of PAs in California: role satisfaction, clinical specialization, and graduate education for PAs. *J Am Acad Phys Assist* 1997 Dec; 10(12):35-6, 43-4, 46 passim.

Abstract: The manuscript of this article is based in part on a paper presented in November 1993 at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in San Francisco, CA. Events leading to the controversy over clinical specialization among PAs are reviewed. The controversy is then examined in light of (1) a trend toward specialization, and (2) the results of a statewide survey of 2,044 PAs in California concerning role satisfaction, demand for graduate education among PAs, and preferred areas of specialization for advanced clinical training in a master's degree program. Of 1,110 PAs who responded to the survey questionnaire, 51% were dissatisfied or were undecided about their satisfaction with the lack of opportunity for career advancement within the PA profession. Forty-nine percent listed personal fulfillment and 28% cited career mobility as the primary reason for seeking a master's degree. Of the 54% who were contemplating enrollment or were already enrolled in a master's program for PAs, 32% selected a primary care specialty as their first choice for advanced clinical training. Thirty-five percent of respondents said that they were definitely leaving (5%), considering leaving (27%), or had already left (3%) the profession because of career stagnation.

Freeborn DK; Hooker RS. Satisfaction of physician assistants and other nonphysician providers in a managed care setting. *Public Health Rep* 1995 Nov-Dec;110(6):714-9.

Abstract: Health maintenance organizations have employed physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other nonphysician providers for decades, yet there is little information on how satisfied these providers are with this form of practice. This paper examines how physician assistants evaluate their experience practicing in a large group model health maintenance organization and compares their attitudes and satisfaction levels with those of other nonphysician providers — nurse practitioners, optometrists, mental health therapists, and chemical dependency counselors. The data source is a 1992 survey of 5,000 nonphysician employees of a health maintenance organization. The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire that included both structured and open-ended questions. The response rate averaged 88% for physician assistants and the other non-physician providers. Physician assistants expressed the most satisfaction with the amount of responsibility, support from coworkers, job security, working hours, supervision, and task variety. They were less satisfied with workload, control over the pace of work, and opportunities for advancement. Most physician assistants were also satisfied with pay and fringe benefits. Compared with other nonphysician

providers, chemical dependency counselors expressed the highest levels of satisfaction across the various dimensions of work and optometrists the lowest. Nurse practitioners, chemical dependency counselors, and mental health professionals also tended to be satisfied with most aspects of practice in this setting. In a number of instances, they were more satisfied than the physician assistants. The findings are consistent with other studies that found health maintenance organizations to be favorable practice settings for physician assistants. The limits of physician assistant involvement and their role satisfaction and efficient use in HMOs are more likely to relate to physician attitudes and acceptance than to lack of support by coworkers and other attributes of the work environment.

Fitzpatrick KT; Huntington CG; Lyons BA; Marion GS Reichman J. New models for PA advancement. Forum discussion. *Phys Assist* 1993 Sep;17(9):67-8, 70-3, 76.

Abstract: Many PAs are grappling with the problem of how to best advance their careers. In this roundtable, the participants discuss traditional methods of advancement and examine the need for new models.

Holmes SE; Fasser CE. Occupational stress among physician assistants. *J Am Acad Phys Assist* 1993 Mar;6(3):172-8.

Abstract: Stress among health care providers has been implicated as a major cause of emotional withdrawal from patients, delivery of poor health care, and job turnover. To determine the extent and effects of occupational stress among PAs, surveys were mailed to a national random sample of 2,334 PAs. The return rate was 58.2%. Survey participants viewed themselves as happy and optimistic, yet physically and emotionally exhausted. Satisfaction was derived from the extent of independence, challenge, and job security present within the PA role. Issues of salary, opportunity for advancement, and management style of employer produced the greatest levels of dissatisfaction and stress. The lack of career mobility and the need to constantly explain and defend one's role had caused some respondents to consider or initiate actions designed to reduce longevity in the profession. If we are to fully understand the causes of attrition from the profession, further studies are warranted. ■