

Toxicology Education in Emergency Medicine PA Postgraduate Programs

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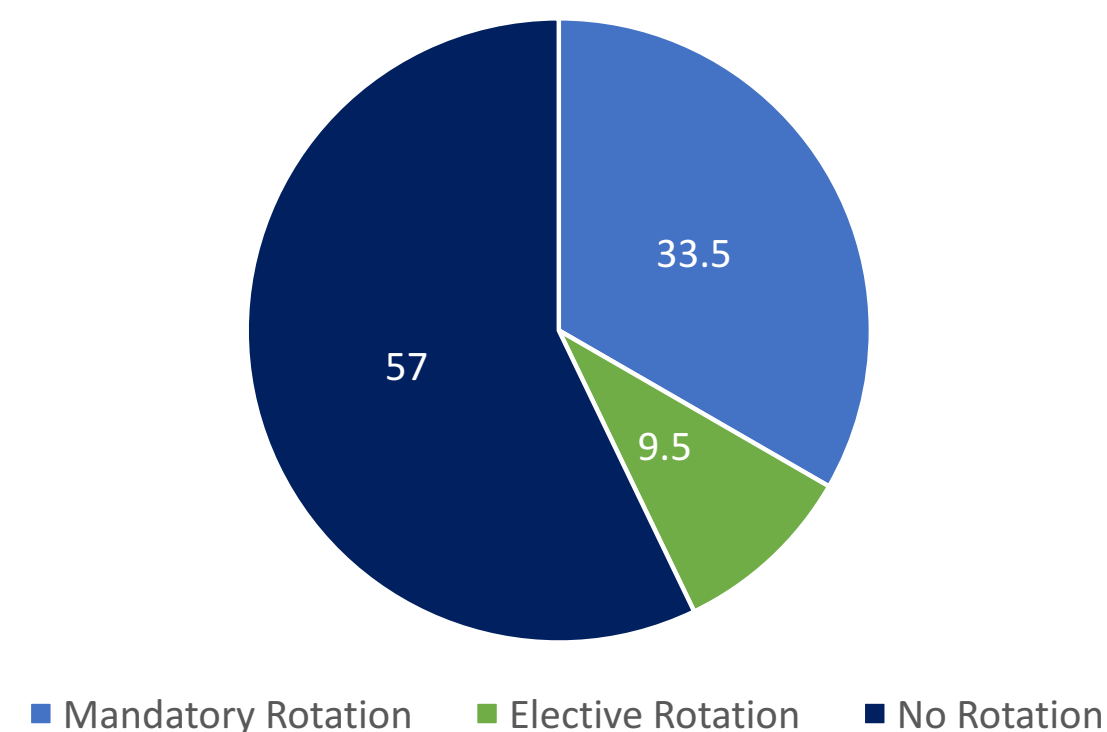
BACKGROUND

Physician assistants (PAs) have become a significant component of the emergency care workforce. Over the past decade, there has been significant expansion in postgraduate educational opportunities for PAs in emergency medicine. These programs are not standardized and may vary regarding toxicology education. The 2016 Model for the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine lists toxicology as core content.¹ The Society of Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants' Emergency Medicine PA Postgraduate Training Program Standards also list toxicology education as core content within PA postgraduate programs.² Toxicology education within physician emergency medicine residencies has been previously described.³ However, little is known if PA programs are following these recommendations and to what extent. PA postgraduate programs will be surveyed to determine the extent of their toxicology educational offerings.

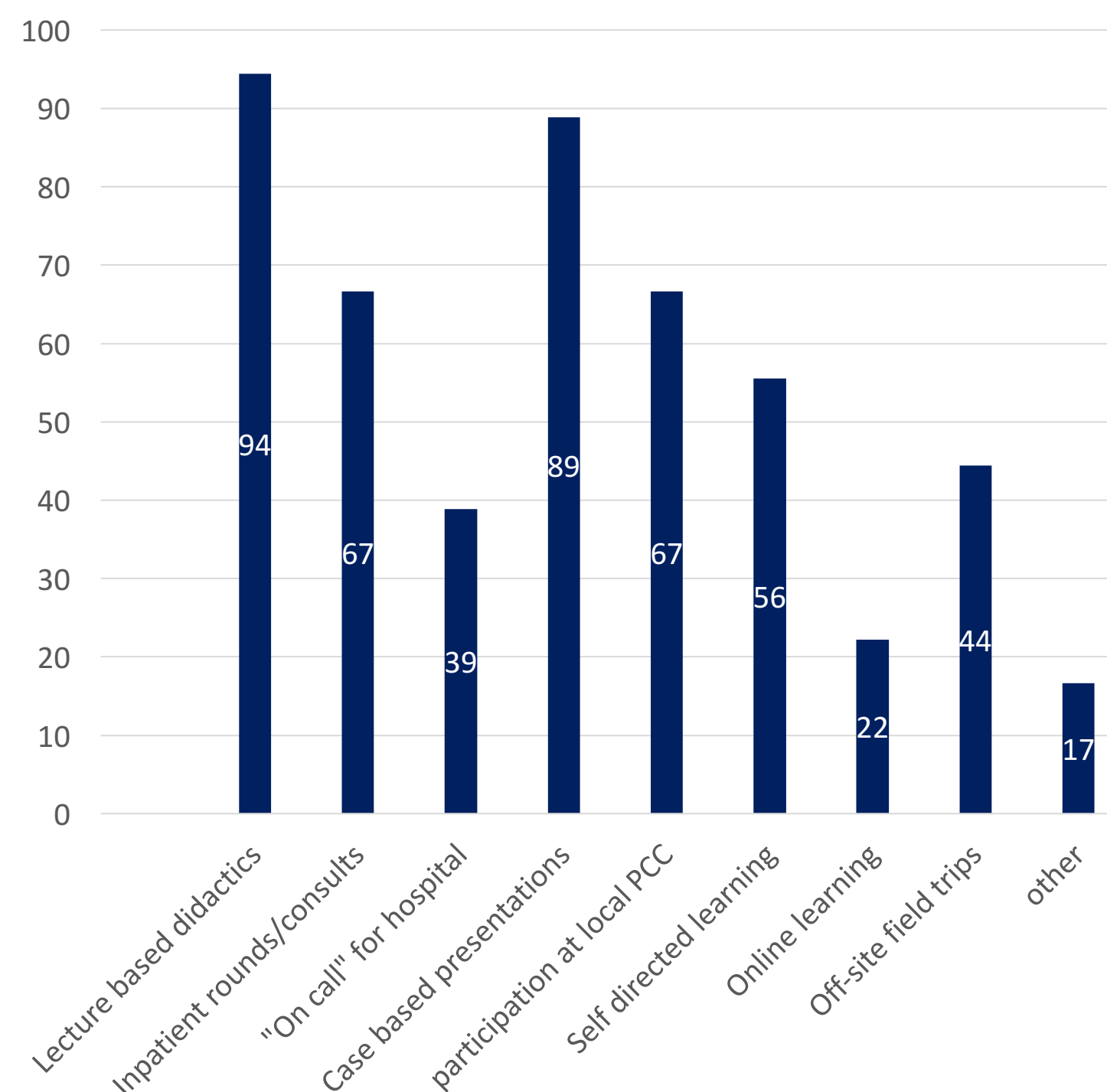
METHODOLOGY

Emergency medicine PA postgraduate programs were identified by an internet search and by organizational listings. A survey was created to determine toxicology educational experiences within these programs. Qualtrics, an online research survey instrument, hosted the survey. Program directors were sent a link to the voluntary survey with reminder notifications sent twice. Descriptive statistics will be used to describe the data.

Percentage of Emergency Medicine PA Postgraduate Programs Offering a Medical Toxicology Rotation



Percentage of PA Residency Medical Toxicology Rotations with Educational Activity



RESULTS

56 emergency medicine PA postgraduate programs were identified. 75% (42) of the identified programs completed the survey. Of those, 43% (18) offer a toxicology rotation with 78% (14) requiring it and 22% (4) offering it as an elective. 48% (20) of all programs offered between 1-5 toxicology lectures per year. 41% (17) of all programs had between 2-4 full time board certified/board eligible toxicologists affiliated with their program. Of programs that offered a toxicology rotation, most (44%) reported that the length of the rotation is 2 weeks and that the location of the rotation is at their home institution (61%). The most common educational activities during a toxicology rotation include lecture based didactics, case based presentations, inpatient rounds/consults and participation at the local poison control center.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of emergency medicine PA postgraduate programs do not offer a toxicology rotation; even though toxicology has been determined to be core content. Programs that did not offer a toxicology rotation were more likely to have no toxicologists affiliated with their program. Programs with a rotation also offered more toxicology lectures per year. Further research is needed to determine if the lack of toxicology education in postgraduate programs affects clinical practice upon graduating.

REFERENCES

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2. Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant Postgraduate Training Program Standards. Society of Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants website <https://www.sempa.org/globalassets/sempa/media/pdf/professional-development/sempa-postgraduate-training-program-standards.pdf>. Accessed April 21, 2020.
3. Darracq MA, Armenian P, Comes J, Thornton S. Medical toxicology education in US emergency medicine residencies. *Am J Emerg Med.* 2018;36(10):1919-1921.