

Professionalism in PA Education as a Predictor of Future Licensing Board Disciplinary Actions

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I. Introduction

- Knowledge and skills around medical professionalism norms and standards are paramount among those needed for clinical practice. PA training is a period in which students are instructed in a compressed and intensive fashion.
- Dealing with lapses in professionalism is a challenging task, often performed in brief timeframes during student enrollment.
- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the association of documented professionalism violations (DPV) during PA education and academic probation to post-graduate disciplinary actions (PGDA) by state PA licensing boards.

II. Methods

- Student data was collected from three PA programs, including the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, and the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, for classes graduating between 2001 and 2011. This data was linked with regional professional records and coded to indicate whether students received PGDA.
- Publicly available board-licensure records were consulted in the state of PA education and states with known work or residence history.
- DPV was defined as any violation of program policy or professional medical norms.
- All institutions provided Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the project.

Outcome	Odds of PGDA	(95% CI)	[p value]
Documented professionalism violations (DPV)	5.15	(1.62–16.31)	[0.01]
Academic Probation	8.43	(2.85-24.92)	[<.001]

Table 1 –Logistic regression odds of post graduate disciplinary actions (PGDA)

III. Results

- Any DPV and academic probation were both statistically significantly associated with increased odds of PGDA (Table 1)
- Participants with any prior DPV had 5.15 times greater odds of PGDA than those without prior DPV (95% CI: 1.62, 16.31; p = .01)
- Participants with documented academic probation had increased odds of PGDA with 8.43 times greater odds (95% CI: 2.85-24.92; p < .001)

IV. Conclusions

- Documented professionalism violations or academic probation while in PA school are significantly associated with higher odds of receiving licensing board disciplinary action.
- Academic probation has a greater magnitude of effect and could represent an intersection of professionalism and academic performance.
- This supports prior studies that have shown similar associations of professionalism violations with state licensing board disciplinary action during physician training.
- Additionally, our findings bring forth academic probation as a significant concern for future behaviors and activities that prompt licensing board actions.
- Meaningful efforts should identify and address professional behavior violations and academic probation during PA training.

V. References

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Cohort

- n = 1364
- Graduated 2001-2011
- 3 Institutions

Explanatory Variables

- Documented Professionalism Violation (DPV)
- Academic Probation

Outcome

- Post-graduate disciplinary action by state licensing board (PGDA)

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