

A Descriptive Study of Physician Assistant Program Preclinical Curricula

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Introduction

- ARC-PA standards
 - Allow flexibility
 - BUT ALSO
 - Advocate commonality
- Last curriculum analysis in 19th Annual APAP Report
 - Survey based
 - 5 years ago
- No published objective data on preclinical year curriculum

Objective

- What is the 'core' curriculum?
 - Does one even exist?
- How does the objective data compare to self-reported data in APAP report?

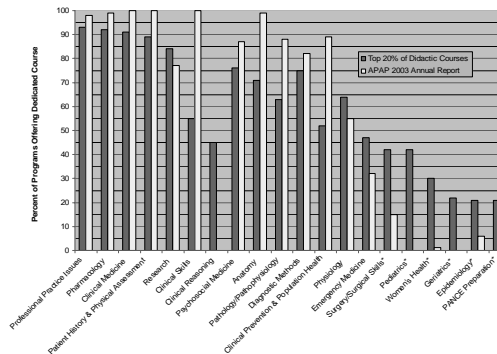
Methods

- Hand review of preclinical course information for all accredited programs
- Data obtained from online course catalogues
- Course categories based on 19th annual report titles
- Course titles, descriptions and hours collected
- SPSS used for all statistical analyses

Results

- Data for 130 programs
 - Exclusions: catalogues unavailable or ongoing course revision
- All programs compared to APAP report
- 105 graduate programs compared to 18 undergraduate programs
 - 7 associate/certificate programs not analyzed separately

Results



Results

Table 1
Basic Medical Science Courses in Masters and Bachelors Programs

Degree		Gross		Pathology/ Patho-physiology			
		Pharmacology	Anatomy	Physiology	Microbiology	Epidemiology	
BS	% Offering	94.4	83.3	61.1	83.3	77.8	83.3
	Mean	4.3	3.8	3.7	3.3	1.3	0.8
	Range	1.3-6.0	1.5-6.0	1.5-7.0	1.5-6.0	1.0-1.5	0.5-1.0
MS	% Offering	90.4	86.7	62.8	60.9	80.0	77.1
	Mean	5.86	0.705	0.888	0.067	0.668	0.552
	Range	1.0-12.0	1.0-11.0	1.0-5.0	1.0-9.0	0.6-7.0	0.5-4.0
	†p-value	0.048	0.064	0.495	0.299	0.195	0.127

†Pearson Chi-Square
‡independent sample comparison of means

Results

Table 2
Clinical Medicine Hours for Masters and Bachelors Programs

Degree		Clinical	Adult/ Adolescent	Behavioral	Emergency	Pediatrics	Surgery	Women's Health	Geriatrics	Immunology	Clinical Prevention & Population Health
		% Offering	80.0	72.2	72.2	72.2	61.1	50.0	27.7	22.2	44.4
BS	Mean	11.0	6.2	2.9	2.3	2.3	3.1	2.1	2.1	1.3	1.1
	Range	4.0-15.0	1.5-11.0	1.0-6.0	1.0-4.0	1.5-3.0	2.0-6.0	2.0-3.0	1.0-3.0	1.0-1.5	0.3-2.0
	% Offering	94.3	96.2	75.2	41.9	35.2	57.1	26.6	20.0	14.3	0.5
MS	Mean	0.033	0.001	0.785	0.017	0.003	0.907	0.046	0.455	0.389	0.486
	Range	13.3	7.1	2.8	2.4	2.4	3.1	2.2	1.9	1.3	2.1
	% Offering	1.0-38.0	1.0-10.5	0.5-12.0	0.5-5.0	0.5-9.0	0.5-12.5	0.5-3.0	0.7-3.0	0.6-3.0	0.3-10.0
	†p-value	0.023	0.73	0.974	0.526	0.619	0.971	0.664	0.54	0.998	0.387

†Pearson Chi-Square
‡independent sample comparison of means

Results

Table 3
Clinical Lab & Skills Courses in Masters and Bachelors Programs

Degree		Patient	Clinical	Clinical	Diagnostic
		Assessment	Skills	Reasoning	Methods
BS	% Offering	83.0	60.0	50.0	80.0
	Mean	6.3	2.8	3.8	2.5
	Range	3.8-11.0	1.0-9.0	1.0-12.0	0.5-8.0
MS	% Offering	90.1	54.2	45.7	80.0
	Mean	0.362	0.917	0.861	0.455
	Range	0.3-18.0	0.5-19	0.3-11.0	0.5-11.0
	†p-value	0.475	0.590	0.736	0.08

†Pearson Chi-Square
‡independent sample comparison of means

Results

Table 4
Advanced Didactic Hours in Masters and Bachelors Programs

Degree		PA Professional	Research	PANCE
		Issues		Preparation
BS	% Offering	77.8	44.4	22.2
	Mean	2.6	1.9	1.4
	Range	1.0-5.0	1.0-3.0	0.5-3.0
MS	% Offering	98.1	93.3	21.0
	Mean	0.001	0.000	0.667
	Range	4.5	6.1	2.4
	†p-value	0.000	0.000	0.160

†Pearson Chi-Square
‡independent sample comparison of means

Discussion

- Differences compared to APAP report
 - Change in number and type of programs
 - Subjective nature (response rate 62%)
- Differences between graduate and undergraduate programs
 - 'Graduate' level courses
 - Topic division vs integration

Discussion

- All programs are ARC-PA accredited
- Discrepancies in course titles, divisions make true comparisons impossible
- A more standardized nomenclature necessary to assess correlation between curriculum design and performance assessment