

Poster # 727

Title: The Supply and Demand of Physician Assistants in the United States: 2005 – 2020 Trend Analysis

Abstract:

The physician assistant (PA) profession role in the U.S. continues to expand. At a time when healthcare workforce researchers concentrate on doctors, attention to non-physician clinicians (NPCs) is under studied. The supply of NPC such as PAs, could significantly influence demand requirements in medical workforce projections. We predict supply and demand for PAs: a supply model utilized the number of certified PAs, the educational capacity (at 10% and 25% expansion) with assumed completion rates and retirement assumptions. Gross domestic product (GDP), chained to 2000 dollars and the U.S. population were utilized in trend analyses with the number of PAs as the dependent variable.

Historical analyses revealed strong correlations between GDP and U.S. population with the number of PAs ( $R^2 = 0.979$  and  $0.983$  respectively) similar to Cooper's correlative findings for doctors. The number of currently certified PAs (as of 2006 = 59,629) represents approximately 76% of the projected demand. At 10% growth, the supply and demand equilibrium for PAs will be reached in 2012.

Robust application trends in PA education enrollment (2.2 applicants per seat for PAs is the same as for allopathic medical school applicants ) support this predicted increase. Factors affecting the supply and demand for PAs are needed in the areas of retirement age rates, gender and lifestyle influences. Specialization trends and visit intensity levels are potential variables. Implications of increases in medical school output and the declination of nurse practitioners are required adjustments.