

Rheumatology Physician Assistant Role Delineation

Roderick S. Hooker
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What do we Know about Rheumatology PAs?

- 2006 AAPA Census
 - 74 adult rheumatology PAs
 - 4 pediatric rheumatology PAs
- 2005 Am College Rheumatology Survey
 - 25% of rheumatology practices employ a PA/NP.
 - Top 20th percentile of rheumatologists by income all employ a PA/NP.
- First PA in rheumatology: 1978
- Estimate: 120 PAs in 2005

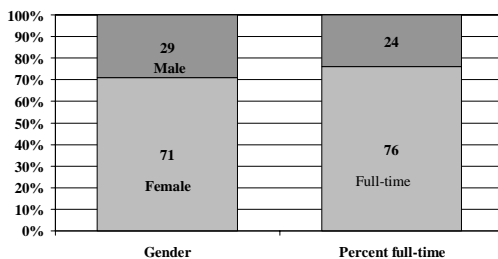
What do Rheumatology PAs do?

- The roles of PAs in rheumatology are not known
 - Are they handmaidens?
 - Are they serving as consultants or medical orthopedists?
- Surveys suggest that 25% of rheumatology practices employ either a PA and/or NP.
- Funding: PAEA Research Institute

Methodology

- Telephone Survey
- AAPA and SPAR membership
- PI, Research assistant and PA student
- *Snowball technique* to expand the registry
 - 110 identified by name
 - Grew and collapse by 10% = ~110
- Internet survey for anonymous responses
 - *Formsite.com*
 - Retacent use

Rheumatology PA Characteristics



What do you do during a normal workweek when not in rheumatology?

- Primary care
- Research
- Dermatology
- Pain Management
- Genetics
- Administration
- Teaching

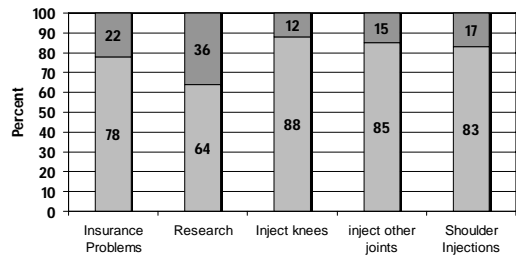


How did you become a rheumatology PA?

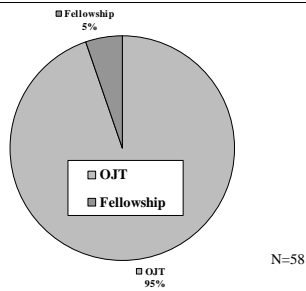
- On the job training
- Rheumatology PA Fellowship
- Converting research to clinical role



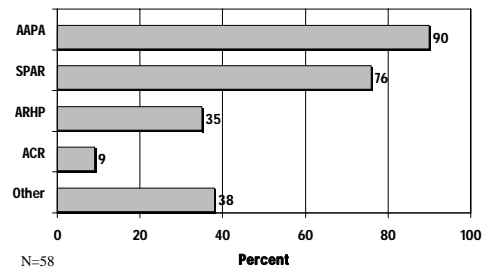
Rheumatology PA Roles



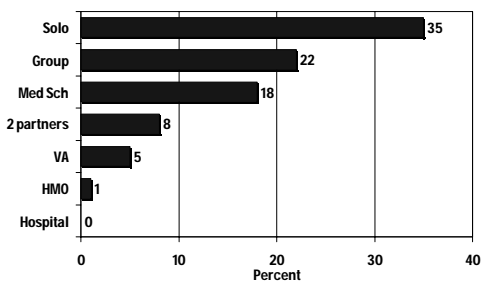
How did you learn rheumatology?



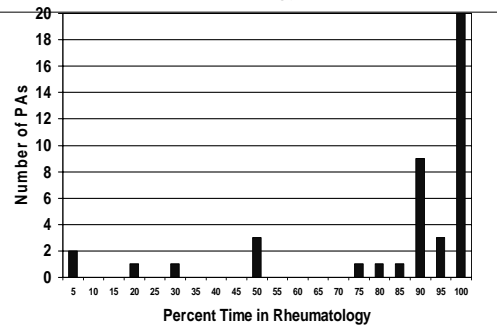
Organizations that rheumatology PAs belong to (percent)



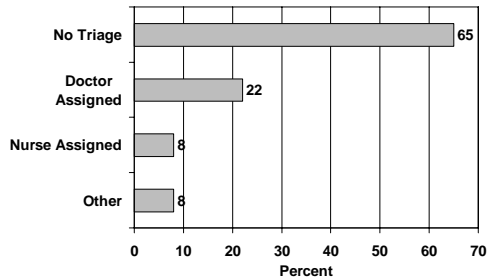
What kind of setting do you primarily work in?



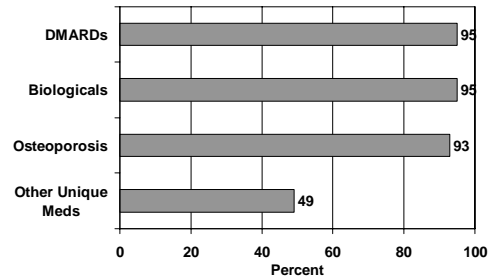
What Percent of Your Time is Spent in Rheumatology?



How are Patients Assigned to You?



Which Medications do you Initiate?



Characteristics of Practice

How Many Patients Do You See?

- Per Day: 5-30
- Per Week: 25-125
- Per Year: >1300

- Patients per clinical schedule (1/2 day): 1-10
- Research: 59%

Number in your practice?

- Rheumatologists: 1-37
- PAs: 1-35
- NPs: 0-200



What are the emerging issues for rheumatology PAs?

- Joining ACR
- Recruiting more PAs in rheumatology
- Certification of rheumatology PAs
- Continuous education
- Research on rheumatology PAs



Future

- How many providers are likely to be *added* by 2010?
 - Rheumatologists: 0-3
 - PAs: 0-4
 - NPs: 0-2



Conclusion

- PAs appear to be in roles similar to the rheumatologists they are working with.
- Task transfer appears to be high.
- The degree of PA cooperation in this survey was overestimated (low).
- Time commitment for this survey was underestimated.
- Surveys as research tools: overstated
- Case studies and time-motion studies of PAs in rheumatology are needed.