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## Objectives

- Describe program characteristics, educational content, implementation methods of current postgraduate Nurse Practitioner (NP) residency/fellowship programs.
- Describe the outcomes, competencies met, and evaluation criteria of participants in postgraduate NP residency/fellowship programs.

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## IOM Recommendation, 2010

“state boards of nursing, accrediting bodies, the federal government, and healthcare organizations should take actions to support nurses’ *completion of transition-to-practice programs* after they have completed a pre-licensure or *advanced practice degree program* or when they are transitioning into new clinical practice areas”

Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2010, p.3

## Background

- A number of healthcare organizations and employers have developed postgraduate NP residency/fellowship programs that supplement formal graduate education.
- There is relatively little research that has systematically examined postgraduate NP residency/fellowship programs in terms of
  - program characteristics
  - program content
  - outcomes of the programs to prepare nurse practitioners for the challenges of the current and future healthcare system.

## Limited Research Focuses on Experiences of Participants

- job satisfaction
- self-assessment, reflections
- interest in NP residency and fellowship programs  
(Bush & Lowry, 2016; Comola, 2014; Flinter & Hart, 2017; Hart & Bowen, 2016; Rugen, 2016; Rugen, 2017; Sciacca & Reville, 2016)
- NPs need help transitioning into practice, and need mentoring and support especially during entry into practice (Hart & Bowen, 2017)

## Limited Research: Factors Create Program Success

- Communication with preceptors, mentoring consistency
- Building evaluation components to quantify program results
- Developing standard characteristics of successful NP residency and fellowship programs
- Developing evidence-based competency assessment tools

Brown, Poppe, Kaminetzky, Wipf, & Woods, 2014; Goudreau et al., 2011; Kells, Dunn, Melchiono, & Burke, 2015; Rugen et al., 2014; Sciacca & Reville, 2016

## Take Away Points from the Research

- Little evidence exists as to whether these programs successfully prepare NPs to deliver better and safer quality of care, beyond their formal nursing education.
- Given the rapid growth in the number of NPs and the trend toward full practice authority, understanding how postgraduate NP residency/fellowship programs contribute to the current and future landscape of NP education and readiness to practice is crucial.

## More Questions than Answers

- What is the extent to which these programs prepare NPs to coordinate and manage care for an aging population with multiple chronic illnesses in diverse healthcare settings, and the extent to which programs prepare NPs for rapidly changing delivery systems and expectations?

## Methodology

- This exploratory study used a quantitative design to conduct an online survey of program directors of NP residency/fellowship programs to collect data about program characteristics, program content, acquired competencies of graduates from these programs
- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum) were calculated for continuous variables while frequency and percentage were calculated for categorical variables.

## Methodology

- An expanded list of programs was developed from Martsolf, et al., 2017, supplemented with accredited programs listed on accreditors websites, and searching program websites
- Invitation sent to 88 programs in US after IRB approval was obtained
- N=41 completed surveys, 49 program directors responded (56% response rate)
- Data were collected from December 2018 to February 2019
- Data analyzed using IBM SPSS version 25
- Categorical data analyzed using frequencies and percentages



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## Program Demographics: What's in a name?

- NP Residency 41%
- NP Fellowship 51%
- Other, postgraduate NP training 5%
- **73.2% of programs surveyed were not accredited**
  - 15% were accredited by The ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program (PTAP)<sup>™</sup>
  - 10% by National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium (NNPRFTC)
  - 3% other

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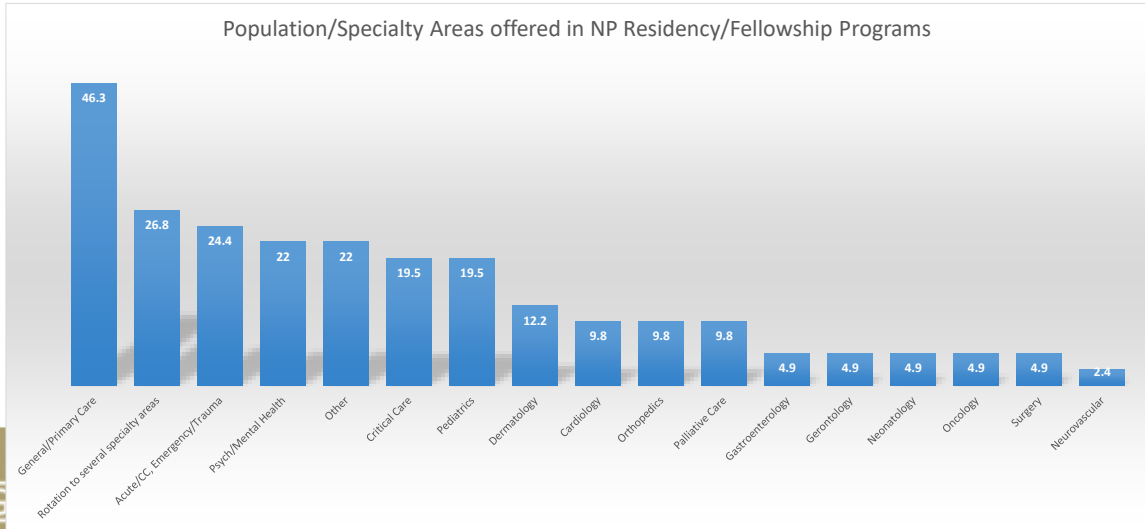
## Program Demographics

- The majority of the programs (85.4%) are 12-18 months in length
- The program length is most commonly 12 months
- Mean length of program time in existence was 4.8 years (SD = 2.69)
- Programs are relatively small with a maximum cohort size of 20 (M= 4.31, SD = 4.20)

## Program Demographics

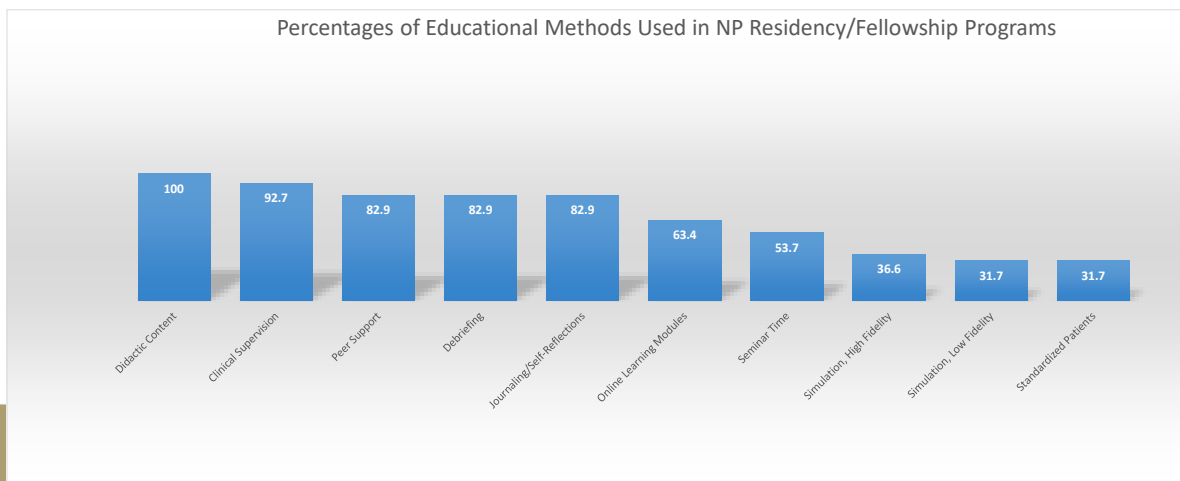
- Eligibility
  - All accept NPs
  - Half of the programs accept Physician Assistants (PAs)
  - 2.5% accept Medical Doctors (MDs).
- 41% reported accepting 2 or 3 NP populations including:
  - Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPNP)
  - Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)
  - Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
  - Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) was the most commonly cited population track offered (73%).

## Chart 1: Population/Specialty Areas offered in NP Residency/Fellowship Programs



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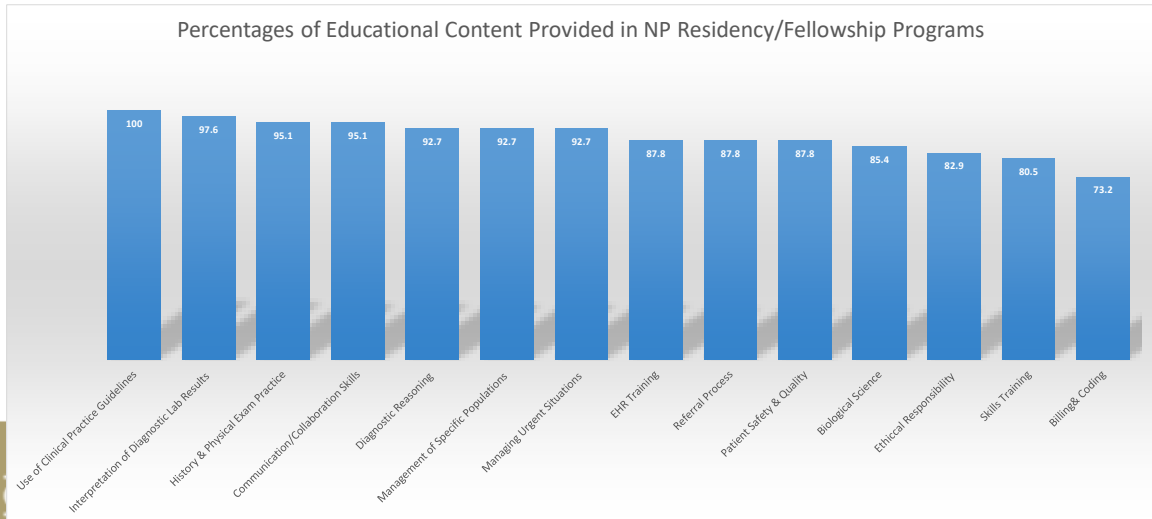
## Chart 2: Percentages of Educational Methods used in NP Residency/Fellowship Programs



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## Chart 3: Percentages of Educational Content Provided in NP Residency/Fellowship Programs



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## Evaluation of NP residents/fellows

- self-assessment (95.1%)
- skills demonstration (92.7%)
- peer review (53.7%)
- knowledge examination (36.6%)

The data showed that there is need to have from 1 to 10 preceptors, with an average of 5 preceptors for each NP resident/fellow.

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## Lack of Consistency in the Use of Standard National Competencies

Competency/Competencies	Percentage
National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium (NNPRFTC)	36.6%
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF)	31.7%
Other	24.2%
Graduate Medical Education (GME)	22.0%
None	12.2%
Interprofessional Education Competencies (IPEC)	9.8%
Veterans Affairs Centers of Excellence in Primary Care Education (VA CoEPCE)	7.3%

## Social Determinants of Health Addressed

Social Determinants of Health	Percentage of Coverage in the Program
Access to health care services	95 %
Socioeconomic conditions	95 %
Availability of community resources	77.5%
Language literacy	72.5%
Education and job training	50 %
Housing	50 %
Transportation options	47.4%
Other food insecurity, safety, trauma	5 %

## Discussion Points

- Our study identified the largest number of programs and had the highest response rate from the survey of program directors
- Absence of programs in states with large rural areas
- There is a need for nursing to define terminology for NP transition to practice programs consistently
- Largest percentage of programs in our study offered primary care in spite of need in rural and underserved areas
- Only a small % are accredited

## Discussion Points

- Strong dependence on didactic sessions and clinical supervision as education methods, with less utilization of more complex and expensive approaches such as low or high fidelity simulation
- Employers are offering new NP graduates more traditional delivery methods with dependence on practice hours with supervision
- Content delivered matches the content offered in graduate nursing education programs

## Discussion Points

- Our findings highlight the need for nurse practitioners to focus on caring for older adults
- Focus on social determinants of health, serving rural communities, particularly access to healthcare and socioeconomic factors was program content delivered in NP residency/fellowship programs and stresses the importance of concentrating on this content in graduate education preparation.

## Recommendations

- This is an opportunity for accrediting bodies to ensure standards and guidance to NP residency /fellowship programs to improve consistency of program standards.
- Opportunity for nursing to influence the establishment and utilization of consistent competency driven model programs reflecting national consensus based nursing standards for knowledge, skills and aptitudes to be acquired in transition to practice programs for NPs.
- The development of evidence-based competency assessment tools would help to quantify outcomes and establish standards of successful NP residency/fellowship programs.

## Implications for Practice

- Implications for Practice: This study serves to provide data that will inform regulators, educators, and employers about the emerging industry of postgraduate NP residency/training programs and inform decision makers about programs.

## Questions?

**Kesten, K.,** El-Banna, M. & Blakely, J. (2019). Educational characteristics and content of postgraduate nurse practitioner residency/fellowship programs. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*, (published ahead of print)

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