

The Characteristics of the U.S. PAs Who Completed a Postgraduate Fellowship/Residency

Dawn Morton-Rias, EDD, PA-C, ICE-CCP, FACHE; Andrzej Kozikowski, PhD; Mirela Bruza-Augatis, PhD, PA-C; Kasey Puckett, MPH; Colette Jeffery, MA; Alicia Quella, PhD, PA-C; Sheila Mauldin, MNM, ICE-CCP; and Joshua Goodman, PhD.
National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants

Background/Objective

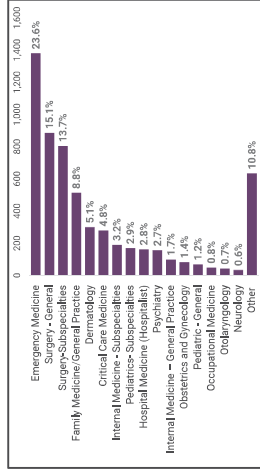
- The development of PA clinical postgraduate (PG) fellowship/residency programs in the U.S. started in 1971, and the number has rapidly grown.
- These programs allow PAs to gain enhanced knowledge, skills, and specialized expertise in various medical disciplines.
- However, the number of PAs who complete a PG fellowship/residency and their specific characteristics remain unknown.
- Thus, this study aimed to assess and compare the attributes of PAs who completed a PG fellowship/residency program vs. those who did not.

Methods

- We utilized the 2021 NCCPA dataset, which included responses from 133,903 PAs who provided, updated, or certified that their information is up to date within the past three years.
- A cross-sectional study was conducted to analyze the demographic, practice, and other essential attributes of PAs who completed a PG fellowship/residency (n=5,859; 5.2% vs. those who did not (n=107,651; 94.8%).
- Analyses included descriptive and bivariate statistics along with quantile regression.

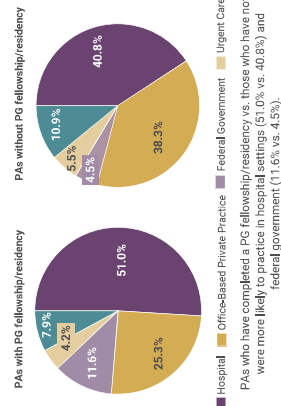
Email questions to [Mirela Bruza at mirelab@nccpa.net](mailto:mirelab@nccpa.net)

Medical specialties of PAs who completed a PG fellowship/residency



The three top medical disciplines in which PAs completed a PG fellowship/residency were: emergency medicine (23.6%), general surgery (15.1%), and surgical subspecialties (13.7%).

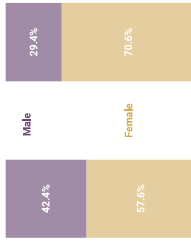
Practice setting (p<0.001)



PAs who have completed a PG fellowship/residency vs. those who have not were more likely to practice in hospital settings (51.0% vs. 40.8%) and federal government (11.6% vs. 4.5%).

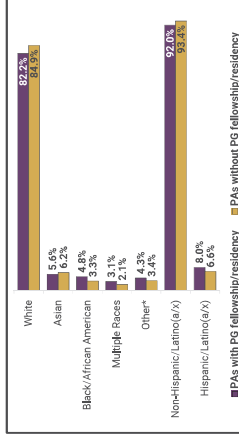
Results

Gender (p<0.001)



PAs who have completed a PG fellowship/residency vs. those who have not were more likely to identify as male (42.4% vs. 29.4%).

Race/Ethnicity of PAs with fellowship/residency vs. PAs without (all p<0.001)



PAs with a PG fellowship/residency vs. PAs without were more likely to identify as Black/African American (4.8% vs. 3.3%), multiple races (3.1% vs. 2.1%), and Hispanic/Latino(a/x) (6.0% vs. 6.6%).

(*Other includes: "other", Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native)

Characteristics of PAs with PG fellowship/residency vs. PAs without

Age Group	PAs with PG fellowship/residency (n=5,859)	PAs without PG fellowship/residency (n=107,651)	P-value
18-29	729 (12.5%)	15,099 (14.0%)	<0.001
30-39	1822 (31.1%)	47,864 (44.5%)	<0.001
40-49	1366 (23.3%)	29,703 (27.6%)	<0.001
50-59	1166 (19.9%)	20,703 (19.2%)	<0.001
60+	562 (9.5%)	9,803 (9.1%)	<0.001
Median (IQR)	42.2 (29-53)	38.0 (24-48)	<0.001
Highest Degree Awarded			
1. Associate Program	54 (0.9%)	953 (0.9%)	<0.001
2. Bachelor's Degree	366 (6.2%)	17,984 (16.6%)	<0.001
3. Master's Degree	337 (5.7%)	2,669 (2.5%)	<0.001
4. Doctorate Degree	146 (2.5%)	625 (0.6%)	<0.001
5. Other	2,877 (49.3%)	36,822 (34.2%)	<0.001
Work	1452 (24.8%)	22,158 (20.6%)	<0.001
Residence	875 (15.0%)	21,855 (20.3%)	<0.001
Midwest	875 (15.0%)	21,855 (20.3%)	<0.001
South	467 (7.9%)	8,999 (8.3%)	<0.001
Other	507 (8.7%)	11,421 (10.6%)	<0.001
Years Certified Categories			
1-20	106 (1.8%)	570 (0.5%)	<0.001
21+	1367 (23.4%)	32,119 (29.9%)	<0.001
21+	1367 (23.4%)	32,119 (29.9%)	<0.001
No primary location	4167 (71.2%)	80,973 (75.2%)	<0.001
Yes, we are more clinical PA jobs, non-clinical location	798 (13.6%)	10,651 (9.8%)	<0.001
Income Categories			
\$60,001 - \$70,000	241 (4.1%)	4,937 (4.5%)	<0.001
\$70,001 - \$80,000	118 (2.0%)	1,748 (1.6%)	<0.001
\$80,001 - \$90,000	118 (2.0%)	2,022 (1.9%)	<0.001
\$90,001 - \$100,000	457 (7.8%)	11,386 (10.6%)	<0.001
\$100,001 - \$110,000	467 (7.9%)	19,731 (18.3%)	<0.001
\$110,001 - \$120,000	444 (7.6%)	11,324 (10.5%)	<0.001
\$120,001 - \$130,000	507 (8.7%)	7,746 (7.2%)	<0.001
\$130,001 - \$140,000	357 (6.1%)	5,408 (5.0%)	<0.001
\$140,001 - \$150,000	177 (3.0%)	2,407 (2.2%)	<0.001
\$150,001 - \$160,000	176 (3.0%)	1,977 (1.8%)	<0.001
\$160,001 - \$170,000	176 (3.0%)	1,315 (1.2%)	<0.001
\$170,001 - \$180,000	311 (5.3%)	3,814 (3.5%)	<0.001
\$180,001 - \$200,000	311 (5.3%)	3,814 (3.5%)	<0.001
More than \$200,000	116 (2.0%)	1,165 (1.1%)	<0.001
Median (IQR)	\$125,000 (\$85,000-\$145,000)	\$93,000 (\$50,000-\$130,000)	<0.001
Hours Working Per Week in Primary Position (mean (SD))	42 (9.4)	41 (9.4)	<0.001
Median (IQR)	42 (30-54)	41 (30-54)	<0.001
Hours Working Per Week in Secondary Position (mean (SD))	46 (9.4)	46 (9.4)	<0.001
Median (IQR)	46 (30-54)	46 (30-54)	<0.001

Key Findings and Conclusion

- PAs who had completed a PG fellowship/residency, in comparison to those who had not, were more likely to be older (median age, 42 years vs. 38 years), identified as male (42.4% vs. 29.4%), Black/African American (4.8% vs. 3.3%), and multiple races (3.1% vs. 2.1%), and Hispanic/Latino(a/x) (6.0% vs. 6.6%).
- PAs with a PG fellowship/residency were also more likely to hold a doctorate (9.1% vs. 1.9%), work in hospitals (51.0% vs. 40.8%), and be certified for over 21 years (29.6% vs. 17.0%) compared to PAs without a PG fellowship/residency.
- Bivariate analysis revealed that PAs with a PG fellowship/residency earned a median income of \$125,000 more than those without (\$125,000 vs. \$115,000).
- However, after adjusting for demographics and practice characteristics, the income difference between the two groups was decreased to \$1,501 (p=0.003).
- Future research should explore the income growth trajectory across these two groups to better understand the financial implications of completing a PG fellowship/residency.

References

1. Puckett K, et al. Association of Postgraduate Fellowship/Residency Completion with the Income of Integrated Clinical Occupational Programs for PAs and NPs. JAMA. 2023;367(25-29). doi:10.1001/jama.2023.2790.48152
2. Kozikowski A, et al. Postgraduate Fellowship/Residency Completion and Income of Physician Assistants. 2023. Accessed February 22, 2024. <https://www.nccpa.net/Portals/0/Assets/Research/Postgraduate%20Fellowship%20and%20Residency%20Programs.pdf>
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