

AANP NEWS AND REPORTS

2004 AANP National Nurse Practitioner Sample Survey, part III: NP income and benefits

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doi:10.1111/j.1745-7599.2005.00094.x

Introduction

In August 2004, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) completed the 2004 AANP National Nurse Practitioner Sample Survey, with a 65-item instrument designed to collect data about nurse practitioners (NPs) and their practice characteristics. The project replicated two earlier studies conducted by AANP in 1989 and 1999, with minor adaptations relevant to contemporary practice. The project collected data on NP clinical specialization, educational background, patient populations, practice communities and settings, prescriptive practices, salaries and employment benefits, liability experiences, and other variables. This is the third article in a series describing the findings from this study and describes the relationship between NP income and several other variables, based on responses of the 16,062 NP respondents who were in active practice at the time of the survey.

The first article in the series provided a more detailed discussion of the study methodology (Goolsby, 2005). However, the target sample was stratified to represent the NP population by specialty and included 23,850 NPs, or approximately 25% of the NP population at the time. The over 16,000 respondents represented approximately 17% of the NP population and are characteristic of the overall population.

NP income and benefits

As reported in Part I, the mean annual salary for all NPs working over 35 h a week across all specialties, settings, years of employment, and other characteristics was \$73,630. The mean hourly income for NPs, regardless of number of hours spent in practice or other characteristics, was \$36.46. The hourly income may be a better indication of NP earning power as many of the respondents practiced fewer than 35 h per week. Significant variation in both annual salary and hourly income was identified based on clinical specialty, educational preparation, practice setting,

and other variables. Part I reported the distribution of NPs based on many of these variables.

There were considerable differences in income among the different clinical specialties (Table 1). Of all NP specialties, neonatal NPs and emergency NPs reported the highest mean annual salary and hourly rate of pay. If a respondent identified multiple specialties, the income is reported by the specialty identified as the "main specialty." A growing percentage of NPs practice in subspecialty practices. Respondents were able to select any of 17 clinical subspecialties in which they had additional education or experience. Based on the survey, NPs practicing in a subspecialty area are more likely to have a higher income than NPs in nonspecialty areas (Table 2). In fact, only NPs specializing in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and/or infectious disease management had an hourly income that was less than the national mean.

Table 3 defines nine U.S. regions and identifies the mean annual and hourly income reported for each region. NPs practicing in the Western and Northeast regions have the highest incomes. NPs practicing in the West South Central and both the East and West North Central regions have the lowest incomes. When the size of the practice community was considered, NPs practicing in larger communities earned more, on average, than those in smaller ones (Table 4).

Based on the survey, NP income increases with higher levels of formal education (Tables 5 and 6) and with increased NP practice (Table 7). NPs who identified a doctoral degree (nursing or nonnursing) as their highest-earned degree, regardless of their NP preparation, earned more than NPs whose highest-earned degree was other than a doctorate. Respondents who completed doctoral NP preparation earned, on average, more than those whose NP preparation was at a lower academic level. There was no further description provided by respondents selecting "other" as the type of preparation they had completed. However, an example of NP preparation that does not fit

Table 1 Income, by specialty

Main specialty	Salary	Hourly
Acute	78,600	37.69
Adult	74,560	36.98
Emergency	83,730	41.58
Family	71,870	35.30
Gerontological	74,750	37.21
Neonatal	81,180	39.23
Occupational health	76,490	36.95
Oncology	75,460	37.14
Pediatric	71,860	35.98
Psych/mental health	79,470	45.96
School	63,490	35.23
Women's health	68,420	34.70

Table 2 Income, by subspecialty

Subspecialty	Annual	Hourly
Cardiovascular	77,030	37.38
Complementary	80,960	42.10
Dermatology	78,290	42.54
Endocrinology	73,400	37.11
ENT	70,430	39.65
Gastroenterology	72,100	36.64
Hematology/oncology	75,370	37.71
HIV/AIDS	70,610	36.25
Infectious disease	74,620	35.89
Nephrology	73,420	37.35
Neurology	73,320	37.56
Orthopedics	77,880	39.61
Palliative/pain	76,050	38.85
Pulmonology	75,170	37.01
Rheumatology	75,340	39.85
Sports medicine	79,890	40.66
Urology	76,950	37.38

the standard academic designations would be a nurse who was working in an NP-like role before the preparation was formalized and who then successfully met requirements for NP recognition based on experience and/or continuing education. The group of respondents selecting "other" NP preparation reported a mean of 20.5 years of NP practice, which was more experience than reported by those pre-

Table 3 Income, by U.S. region

Region	Annual	Hourly
Northeast: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	79,790	38.86
Mid-Atlantic: NJ, NY, PA	72,880	36.69
East North Central: IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD	70,980	34.14
West North Central: IN, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD	70,600	33.69
South Atlantic: DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, DC	71,120	35.10
East South Central: AL, KY, MS, TN	70,640	34.53
West South Central: AK, LA, OK, TX	78,380	37.27
Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY	75,700	36.82
West: AK, CA, HI, OR, WA	81,190	40.81

Table 4 Income by community size and type

	Salary	Hourly
Community size		
<1000	70,000	35.25
1000–24,999	70,000	35.02
25,000–50,000	71,370	35.41
Community type		
Suburban	75,330	37.28
Inner city	75,730	37.28

Table 5 Income by NP preparation

NP preparation	Salary	Hourly
Certificate	72,340	36.02
Baccalaureate	74,210	38.95
Master's	73,520	36.31
Post-master's	75,400	37.46
Doctorate	77,530	40.50
Other	87,530	39.46

Table 6 Income by Highest Degree Earned

Highest-earned degree	Salary	Hourly
Associate degree	70,850	35.35
Diploma	68,020	33.94
Nursing baccalaureate	71,230	35.88
Other baccalaureate	74,530	37.56
Nursing master's	73,610	36.64
Other master's	76,360	39.99
Nursing doctorate	81,590	38.61
Other doctorate	88,480	43.06

pared at certificate (17 years), baccalaureate (17 years), master's (7 years), post-master's (7 years), and doctorate (10 years). The higher income for this group may be associated with their extra NP experience. Overall, reported income increased with years of experience as an NP. Table 8 shows categorical data, with the largest reported increase in income is identified between NPs with less than 5 years of practice and those with between 6 and 10 years of practice. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the increase in NP income with years of experience.

Table 7 Income by years of experience

Years of experience	Salary	Hourly
5 or fewer	70,800	34.84
6–10	74,660	36.80
11–15	76,070	37.21
16–20	76,600	38.26
Over 20	77,530	38.24

Table 8 Income by practice setting

Type of setting	Salary	Hourly
Private NP	85,929	48.75
Emergency department	84,160	41.19
Health maintenance organization/managed care	83,463	43.10
Veterans administration	81,130	39.42
Hospital inpatient	78,137	37.98
Occupational/employee health department	76,411	36.33
Hospital outpatient	73,969	36.42
Extended/long-term care	73,916	37.05
Other freestanding primary care	73,883	35.84
Correctional	71,914	34.59
Private physician	70,730	34.75
Rural health	69,277	33.55
Community health	68,926	36.02
School health	65,193	34.80
Public health	61,832	31.55
Family planning	61,620	31.55

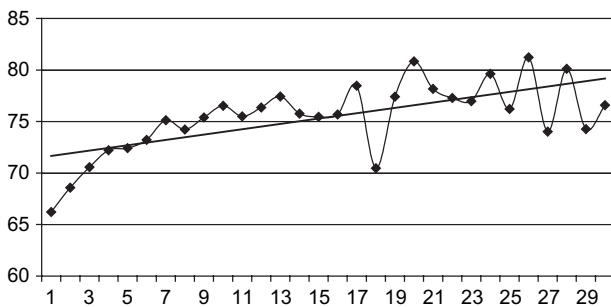


Figure 1 Salary and years of experience.

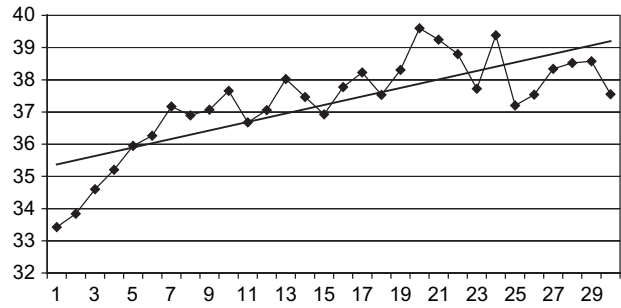


Figure 2 Hourly income and years of experience.

The income of male respondents was considerably higher than that of the female respondents. Male NPs reported mean salary of \$80,240 and mean hourly income of \$38.72, compared to \$73,120 and \$36.33, respectively, for the female NPs. Some of the variation is likely related to differences in the clinical specialization and other variables between the two groups. For instance, a greater percentage of male respondents than females identified emergency as their main specialty (5.6% vs 1.6%) and a smaller percentage of male respondents identified women’s health (0.5% vs 13.0%) and school health (0.5% vs 0.9%) as their main specialty. More detail in differences in practice between male and female NPs will be described in a later report.

Only 6.5% of respondents indicated that they were not nationally certified. Interestingly, those without national certification reported, on average, higher incomes than NPs who were certified. The mean annual and hourly income for respondents who were not certified were \$77,380 and \$38.82, respectively, compared to \$73,330

Table 9 Benefits by practice setting

Type of setting	Paid vacation	Sick leave	Professional leave	Travel allowance	Journal allowance	Professional dues	Professional liability
Private NP	39.6	36.4	44.7	38.6	22.6	33.9	48.5
Emergency department	54.9	48.3	55.8	56.0	26.4	34.9	82.7
Health maintenance organization/managed care	82.1	85.4	88.7	51.7	28.7	29.4	82.3
Veterans administration	85.4	95.8	93.0	55.1	2.2	2.0	36.9
Hospital inpatient	85.5	86.2	80.8	63.6	20.5	26.2	66.1
Occupational/employee health department	77.4	78.2	79.4	61.3	35.7	46.8	63.5
Hospital outpatient	83.6	87.1	85.0	64.9	20.7	28.8	68.7
Extended/long-term care	74.7	73.4	75.0	53.2	25.9	31.7	71.2
Other freestanding primary care	71.4	65.7	77.7	59.9	31.3	42.0	73.6
Correctional	77.8	79.0	70.4	37.0	6.8	8.6	54.3
Private physician	74.4	63.9	74.8	58.3	30.3	47.3	85.5
Rural health	80.3	79.2	85.9	78.1	42.4	48.3	82.5
Community health	75.3	77.1	81.0	59.4	22.0	28.9	72.6
School health	67.4	83.2	79.9	57.4	15.1	19.8	57.0
Public health	80.3	86.3	80.9	62.5	10.4	7.6	56.6
Family planning	68.3	67.9	66.4	58.1	11.7	16.2	70.6
Overall	73.5	71.7	75.5	57.7	23.5	33.8	70.9

and \$36.26 for certified NPs. This finding may be explained, in part, by years of experience. Those without national certification had, in general, more years of experience (mean 19.6 years) than those who were certified (mean 13.3 years).

Income differed based on whether or not the NP was a shareholder and/or partner in the practice. NP practice shareholders had a mean hourly rate of \$40.40 and/or a salary of \$79,901, compared to \$36.17 and \$73,100, respectively, for those who were not shareholders. NPs who were partners in the practice earned an average of \$45.07 per hour and/or \$85,530 annually, compared to \$36.15 and \$73,100, respectively, for those who were not partners. Income also varied based on the type of setting in which the NP had her main practice (Table 8). NPs reporting the highest annual and hourly income were those in private NP practices.

The overall percentage of NPs whose employment benefit package included paid vacation, paid sick leave, professional leave, travel allowance, journal allowance, professional dues, and/or professional liability was described in Part I of this report (Goolsby, 2005). Table 9 displays the percentage of NPs practicing in each of the listed practice settings who received the specified benefits, as well as the overall percentage, as a comparison. The

benefits reported are for all NPs identifying the setting as the type of their main practice site, regardless of whether they practiced full time or part time. While NPs practicing in private NP practices have higher income, they were less likely to receive the listed benefits as part of their compensation package.

Summary

NP income continues to increase. Higher income is associated with higher levels of education and years of experience. NP income also differs depending on the geographic region and size of community in which the NP's practice is located, as well as the type of setting in which the NP practices. This report is based on the responses of over 16,000 practicing NPs and summarizes the most comprehensive data set on NP income and benefits.

References

- Goolsby, M. J. (2005). 2004 AANP National NP Sample Survey, Part I: An Overview. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, 17(9), 337–341.