



2012 National AANP Sample Survey

Report on NP Prescribing

The Voice of the Nurse Practitioner®

Introduction

In the fall of 2012, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) completed the fifth iteration of the National Nurse Practitioner (NP) Sample Survey. Previous versions were conducted in 1989, 1999, 2004 and 2009-10. The purpose of this survey was to identify the characteristics and practices of nurse practitioners nationwide. The survey consisted of sixty questions relating to NP education, certification, specialization, practice communities and settings, and prescribing and diagnosis. This report depicts an overview of NP prescribing characteristics.

Methods

In September 2012, AANP sent an email invitation including a link to the online 2012 AANP National NP Sample Survey to a random sample of 29,710 NPs. The sample was drawn from the AANP National NP Database, which houses contact information for almost every NP in the United States. Over a four week period, 5,132 nurse practitioners opened the survey and 4,231 completed it for a response rate of 14.2% and a completion rate of 82.4%. This report is limited to the NP respondents who were in active clinical practice; therefore, 253 respondents were not included in analysis because they were not currently practicing.

Results

NPs are authorized to prescribe in all fifty states and Washington D.C. and almost all (97.2%) respondents from all specialty areas indicated that they prescribe pharmacologic agents for patients (see Table 1). Respondents across all settings and specialties wrote an average of nineteen prescriptions per day. Respondents who reported working full time (35 hours or more per week) in clinical practice wrote an average of twenty-one prescriptions per day. Table 1 displays the percentage of NPs from each specialty area that prescribe as well as the mean and median number of prescriptions written per day by respondents working full-time in clinical practice.

Table 1 Number of Prescriptions by Main Specialty

Specialty	Percentage Prescribing	Prescriptions/Day		
		n	Mean	Median
Acute Care	97.7%	358	20	15
Adult	96.7%	556	19	10
Family	98.3%	718	27	20
Gerontology	93.6%	176	19	12
Neonatal	94.4%	25	5	3
Pediatric	97.7%	95	15	10
Psych/Mental Health	97.9%	83	22	20
Women's Health	97.5%	85	15	12

Top Agents Prescribed by NPs

Table 2 represents the top ten pharmaceutical agents regularly (15 or more times/week) prescribed by NPs. The drugs most commonly prescribed include Antihypertensives (24.7%), Antimicrobials (20.6%) and Diabetic Agents (20.1%).

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Table 2 Top Agents Regularly Prescribed by NPs (>=15/week)

	Percentage of Respondents
Antihypertensives	24.7%
Antimicrobials	20.6%
Diabetic Agents	20.1%
Dyslipidemic Agents	18.7%
Analgesics, NSAID	18.5%
Diuretics	14.2%
Analgesics, Narcotics	14.1%
Vaccines/Immunizations	14.0%
Analgesics, other	13.4%
Bronchodilators	13.4%

NP Prescribing by Setting

There was variation in the percentage of NPs that prescribe and the reported number of prescriptions written per day based on community size. While 100.0% of NPs that work in rural communities of less than 1,000 people prescribe, 96.2% of NPs in communities over one million people prescribe. Table 3 displays data on the percent of respondents who prescribe in communities of various sizes as well as the mean and median number of prescriptions written by full-time NPs per day in these communities.

Respondents working in emergency room/urgent care settings wrote the most prescriptions per day while NPs working in home health agencies wrote the least. Table 4 describes the percentage of NPs that prescribe as well as the mean and median prescriptions per day for full-time NPs by practice setting.

Table 3 Prescribing by Community Served

Size of Community	Percentage Prescribing	Prescriptions/Day		
		<i>n</i>	Mean	Median
< 1,000	100.0%	27	25	20
1,000 - 9,999	99.0%	183	26	20
10,000 - 24,999	98.4%	174	26	20
25,000 - 49,999	97.5%	230	25	17
50,000 - 99,999	97.3%	301	19	15
100,000 - 249,999	97.2%	396	22	15
250,000 - 499,999	96.1%	260	21	15
500,000 - 999,999	97.1%	220	18	10
> 1,000,000	96.2%	302	18	12

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Table 4 Prescribing by Practice Setting

Setting	Percent Prescribing	Prescriptions/Day		
		<i>n</i>	Mean	Median
Emergency Room/Urgent Care	100.0%	114	35	30
Rural Health Clinic	100.0%	121	33	25
Academic Medical Center	100.0%	5	30	10
Military	100.0%	17	22	20
Retail-Based Clinic	100.0%	36	20	15
Private Physician Practice	99.4%	549	24	20
Veterans Administration Facility	99.2%	74	30	20
Community Health Center	99.1%	110	28	20
College Health	98.7%	28	13	10
HMO	98.0%	20	17	13
Health Department	97.6%	18	19	13
Private NP Practice	97.1%	112	24	20
Long Term Care Facility	96.9%	68	15	10
Hospital Outpatient Clinic	96.4%	294	17	10
In-Patient Hospital Unit	96.4%	334	14	10
Hospice	95.7%	12	13	13
Occupational/Employee Health Clinic	95.0%	54	8	5
Correctional Facility	94.3%	17	29	20
Homeless/Indigent Care	94.1%	8	27	18
School Health	92.3%	10	9	7
Home Health Agency	52.4%	7	6	5

Controlled Substances

Table 5 displays the frequency at which NPs prescribe scheduled drugs. Respondents most frequently reported prescribing all scheduled drug categories one to five times per week. The majority of respondents that reported prescribing Schedule 2 drugs on a regular basis (15 or more times per week) worked in hospice (40.9%), academic medical centers (26.7%) and in-patient hospital units (18.0%). Among those working in retail-based clinics, 85.7% reported that they never prescribe schedule 2 drugs.

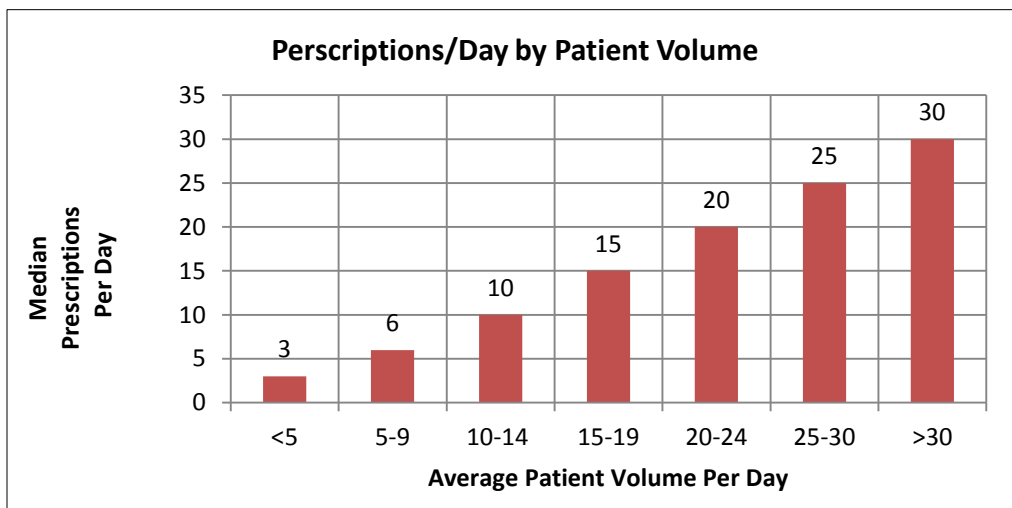
Table 5 Prescribing Frequency for Controlled Substances

	Never	Occasionally (1-5/week)	Frequently (6-15/week)	Regularly (>15/week)
Schedule 2	39.1%	40.1%	12.9%	7.9%
Schedule 3	24.7%	44.2%	21.2%	9.9%
Schedule 4	24.4%	43.9%	20.4%	17.5%
Schedule 5	26.4%	42.7%	17.5%	13.5%

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Prescriptions by Patient Volume

The reported number of prescriptions per day varies significantly based on the reported average number of patients seen per day. The histogram below depicts the relationship between daily patient volume and number of prescriptions. Experienced NPs (NPs with more than 10 years’ experience) did not report prescribing a significantly higher average number of prescriptions per day than less experienced NPs.



Drug Information

When asked about where they obtained information on new drugs, respondents most frequently reported continuing education activities and journal articles. Table 6 displays the frequency of other reported sources of new drug information.

Table 6 Sources of Information on New Drugs	
	Percentage of Respondents
Continuing Education Activities	91.4%
Journal Articles	76.8%
Colleagues	64.6%
Pharmacist	51.9%
Pharmaceutical Representative	49.7%
Packaged product information	43.1%
Journal Advertisements	30.3%
Media	19.7%

Limitations

The 2012 National AANP Sample Survey was conducted solely by email solicitation, limiting responses to those who had working email addresses and access to a computer and internet. Results may not be generalizable to the national NP population due to a lower than expected response rate and should not be compared to previous sample surveys due to the change in methods. Data were not weighted to adjust for potential unexpected or disproportionate effects.