

THE Clinical Advisor

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Geriatric Workforce Shortage Creates Opportunities for PAs

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The following article is part of *The Clinical Advisor's* coverage from the **2018 American Academy of Physician Assistants' annual meeting** in New Orleans. Our staff will be reporting live on original research, case studies, and professional outreach and advocacy news from leading PAs in many specialty areas. Check back for ongoing updates from AAPA 2018.

NEW ORLEANS—Physician assistants (PAs) can help fill the current healthcare workforce shortage in geriatrics, according to research presented at the American Academy of Physician Assistants' (AAPA) 2018 conference.

Benjamin J. Smith, PA-C, DFAAPA, from Florida State University College of Medicine's School of Physician Assistant Practice in Tallahassee, and associates compared and compiled information from the **AAPA** national survey and the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) data to understand how many PAs work in geriatrics and their associated characteristics.

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Few PAs reported geriatrics as their primary specialty.

The participants in the AAPA surveys from 2016 and 2017 were currently practicing in a US-based setting.

The investigators reported that 85 PAs had a primary specialty and 204 PAs had a secondary specialty in geriatrics in 2015. Of the PAs who self-reported working in a primary setting, their fields of work more frequently included extended care facilities, **nursing homes**, physician offices or clinics, and rehabilitation centers.

When PAs were asked whether they would pursue geriatrics specialties again in 2015 and 2016, 33.3% and 33.4%, respectively, replied that they strongly agreed to continue with geriatrics.

“PA educators should structure curriculum and clinical experiences to prepare students for opportunities in geriatrics,” concluded the authors. “Practicing PAs, regardless of medical specialty, should seek lifelong learning opportunities to deepen their medical knowledge to be prepared to provide optimal care for the geriatric population.”

AAPA 2018 continues through Wednesday, May 23. Visit <https://www.aapa.org/conference/> for more information.