

Authors:

Kristin Hittle Gigli, PhD, APRN, RN, CPNP-AC; Assistant Professor, Graduate Nursing, College of Nursing and Health Innovation, University of Texas at Arlington; Arlington, Texas

Ashleigh F. Bowman, DNP, RN, CRNP, CPNP-AC, SANE-A, SANE-P; Assistant Professor, Maternal Child Nursing Department, University of South Alabama, College of Nursing and Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Emergency Department, USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital; Mobile, Alabama

Abstract:

Background/Significance: Pediatric-focused nurse practitioners (NPs) play an essential role in achieving optimal child health. Yet, as a small portion of the overall NP workforce, unique challenges surround full role implementation.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify challenges in pediatric-focused NPs' practice that limit their ability to provide care.

Methods: We conducted a secondary data analysis of a cross-sectional mixed-methods survey of pediatric-focused NPs conducted by the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) in the Fall of 2021. The survey included three open-ended questions. We conducted inductive thematic analysis of one open-ended question: What is the biggest challenge to the pediatric-focused NP role? Each author open-coded a representative sample of the data, then met to group codes into themes. Using an iterative process, the final codebook comprised of 18 total themes. This abstract focuses on themes related to pediatric-focused NP role recognition which aligns with the NAPNAP research priority area - the pediatric workforce. The University of Texas at Arlington IRB deemed this study non-human subjects' research.

Results: In total, 980 pediatric-focused NPs responded. A majority (67.9%) were primary care pediatric NPs, and 15.2% were acute care pediatric NPs. Nearly half (n=421, 43.0%) had 15 or more years of NP experience. Most respondents (n=952, 97.1%) provided an open-ended question response. Overall, respondents identified challenges with "who we are" and "what can we do". Themes related to "who we are" included: role recognition, certification alignment, education quality, and workforce capacity. Respondents described challenges in "what can we do" with themes including: work to full scope and be valued as pediatric experts.

Discussion/conclusion: Pediatric-focused NPs identified barriers to role recognition that align with improving professional identity. Future research should address barriers to role recognition to increase the ability of pediatric-focused NPs to contribute to child healthcare delivery.

Keywords: nurse practitioner, pediatric, role recognition, workforce

Statement regarding IRB approval: The University of Texas at Arlington IRB deemed this study non-human subjects' research.

Acknowledgement of any funding: N/A