



REPORT OF THE 2016 PRACTICE ANALYSIS OF EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONERS

August 2016

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About this Report

AANPCB contracted with Professional Examination Service (ProExam) to design and implement the practice analysis of emergency nurse practitioners and produce this report. We wish to thank and acknowledge the work of Patricia M. Muenzen, MA and Carla M. Caro, MA, CS of the ProExam Department of Research and Advisory Services, New York, NY for their expertise in implementation of the project.

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Executive Summary

A practice analysis study was conducted by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP) in January – April 2016 to create a content outline and test specifications for a new advanced practice nursing specialty certification in emergency care. Conduct of a practice analysis is required for developing high-stakes examinations including those for professional certification.

The practice analysis was designed to obtain descriptive information about specialty nurse practitioner (NP) practice in emergency care. The work was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, a task force of subject-matter experts created a qualitative description of domains of practice, tasks performed, knowledge bases required, and procedures performed in emergency care. The task force was selected for their expertise in emergency care and was balanced with respect to diversity in practice settings and geographic locations. In the second phase of the study, validation evidence for the domains, job tasks, knowledge, and procedures was obtained through a survey of practice. Evidence from the validation survey was used to create a test content outline for the ENP examination.

The delineation of ENP practice created by the task force included 23 tasks in five domains of ENP practice: Medical Screening, Medical Decision Making/Differential Diagnoses, Patient Management, Patient Disposition and Professional, Legal and Ethical Practices. The delineation also included 42 knowledge areas used and 68 procedures performed by ENPs.

An online survey was conducted to validate the delineation of ENP practice. The survey included rating scales for the domains, tasks, knowledge bases, and procedures, contained in the delineation; a background questionnaire; and a set of qualitative questions regarding the completeness of the delineation. Two rating scales were used. One focused on how frequently ENPs performed tasks, used knowledge bases, or performed procedures. The other focused on how harmful the results would be if an ENP performed the task or procedure incorrectly or was not in possession of the knowledge base.

AANPCP invited all AANPCP-certified FNPs who reported recent practice in emergency care and interest in participating in the validation effort (N=1,703) to take the survey. The Emergency Nurses Association, a professional association for emergency nursing, also disseminated the survey link to 888 ENA members who were NPs. In addition, three large employers of ENPs—CEP America, Northwell Health, and TeamHealth—distributed the survey link to their NP employees who practiced in emergency or urgent care. There were 474 completed surveys.

The majority of respondents (88%) worked in hospital emergency departments. Almost all (96%) were educationally prepared and certified as family nurse practitioners. Most (88%) received training in emergency care on the job or through continuing education. Respondents' patients were primarily non-urgent/primary care (44%) and urgent care (41%); 15% were emergent/critical care.

Ratings for the tasks, knowledge areas, and procedures were examined to verify their eligibility for inclusion in the ENP content outline. Recommended distributions of test questions across each of the five domains and each of 10 types of patient conditions/emergency types were made based on survey ratings. The test blueprint resulting from the study will guide item writing and examination development initiatives. Linkage of the blueprint to the results of the practice analysis provides the foundation for examination content validity.