



# Evolving PA degrees: Evaluating practicing PA's perceived value in obtaining a clinical doctoral degree.

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## Purpose & Strategic Overview

There is a growing trend of PAs who have obtained doctoral-level education and an increase in PA doctoral-level programs. The objective of this study is to determine the percentage of individuals who believe that the PA profession should be at the level of a clinical doctorate, their willingness to attend a postgraduate program, and their interest in specialty tracts based on years of experience in the profession.

## Methods

This cross-sectional study used an IRB-approved survey instrument designed by the researchers and disseminated to two accredited PA programs with a national alumni base. The survey assessed participants' agreement with the importance of a clinical doctorate for the PA profession and their likelihood to seek such a degree. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and logistic regression odds ratios.

## Survey Results

530 PA respondents. Career length was found to have a significant effect on respondents' perceptions, with more experienced PAs showing higher value for advanced clinical degrees ( $p < 0.05$ ) across the questions in the survey. Specialty-focused training interest was highest with Emergency Medicine, Critical Care, Orthopedics, and Infectious Disease.

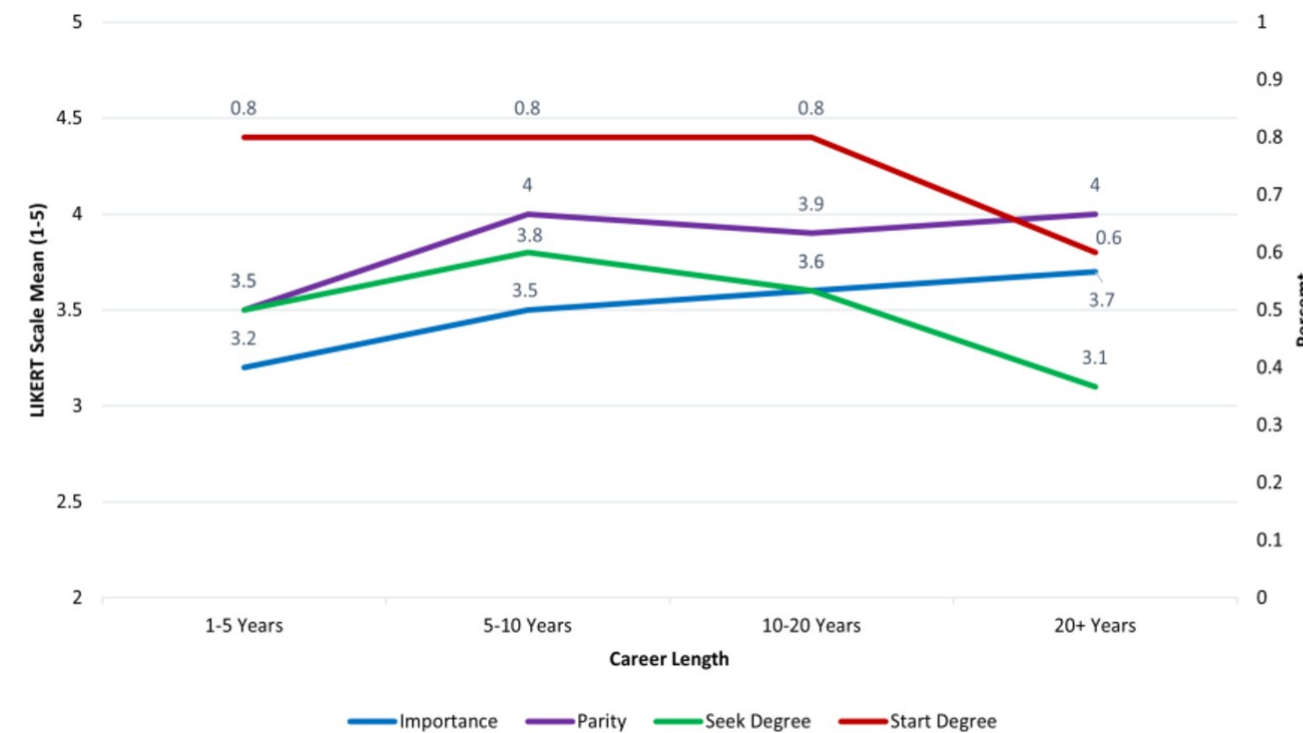
## Discussion & Conclusions

Career length did appear to have an influence on the value of a doctoral degree, showing more importance with a longer career than a new graduate. Educational training and specialty practice settings did not appear to influence responses toward seeking and starting a doctoral degree. The findings indicate support for establishing a clinical doctorate program for PAs, with solid support from current working clinicians. Additionally, there is evidence of increased interest in specialized tracks

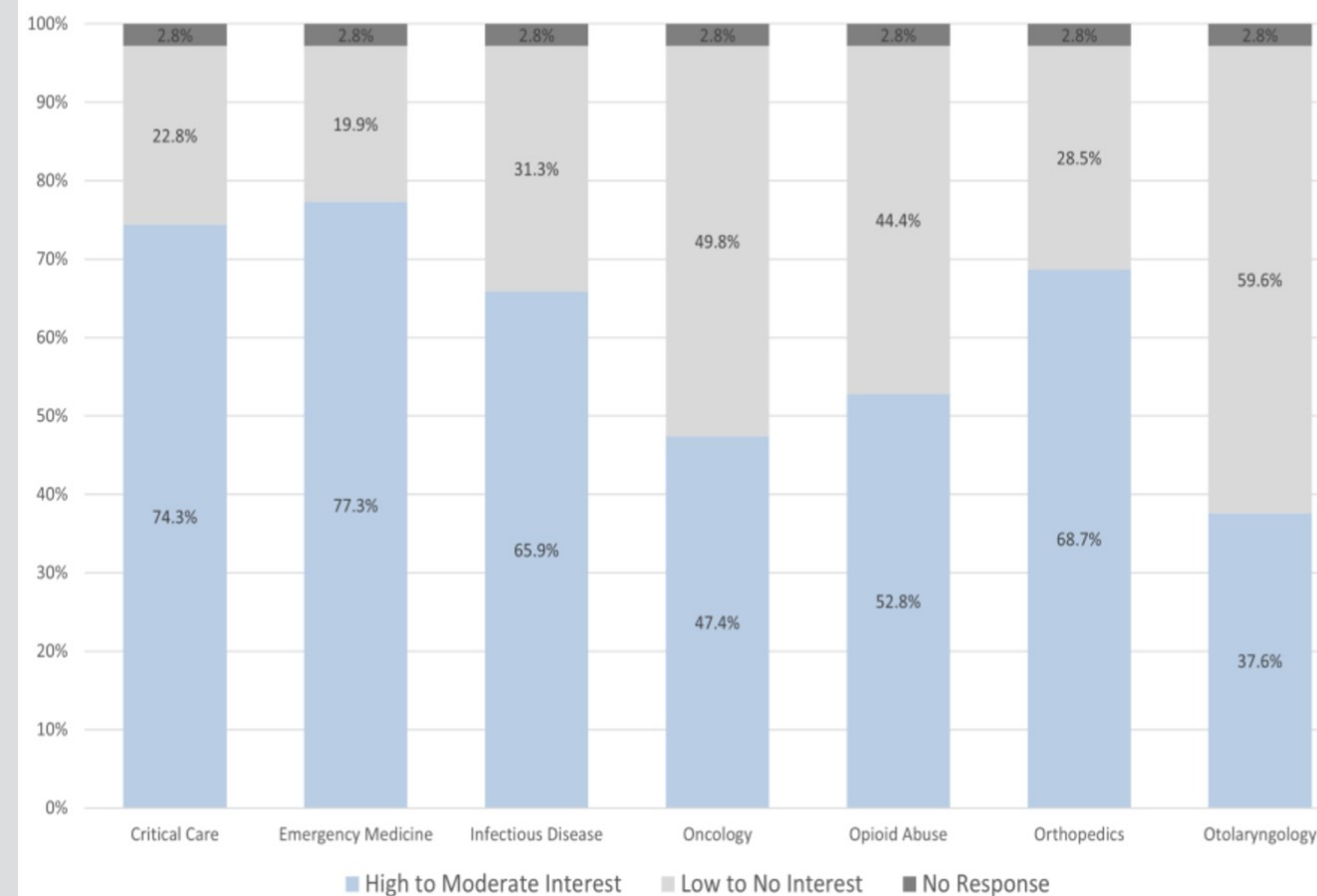
## References

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- 2) Kibe LW, Kayingo G, Cawley JF. Reviving the PA doctorate debate: A look at PA faculty trends. Poster presented at: American Academy of Physician Assistants Annual Conference; May 2017; Las Vegas, NV.
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Mean Comparison Across Career Length



Interest in Specialty Tracts



Degree Importance by Career Length

