

Current Trends and Characteristics of U.S. PA-Specific Doctoral Programs



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Background and Objectives

Background:

- PA-specific doctoral programs have gained traction in the U.S. over the past decade.¹⁻³
- Little is known about their structure and outcomes. Primary goals include enhancing knowledge and skills to advance the PA career in clinical, leadership, education and scholarship.
- Scholarly work improves job satisfaction and well-being for PAs.

Objectives:

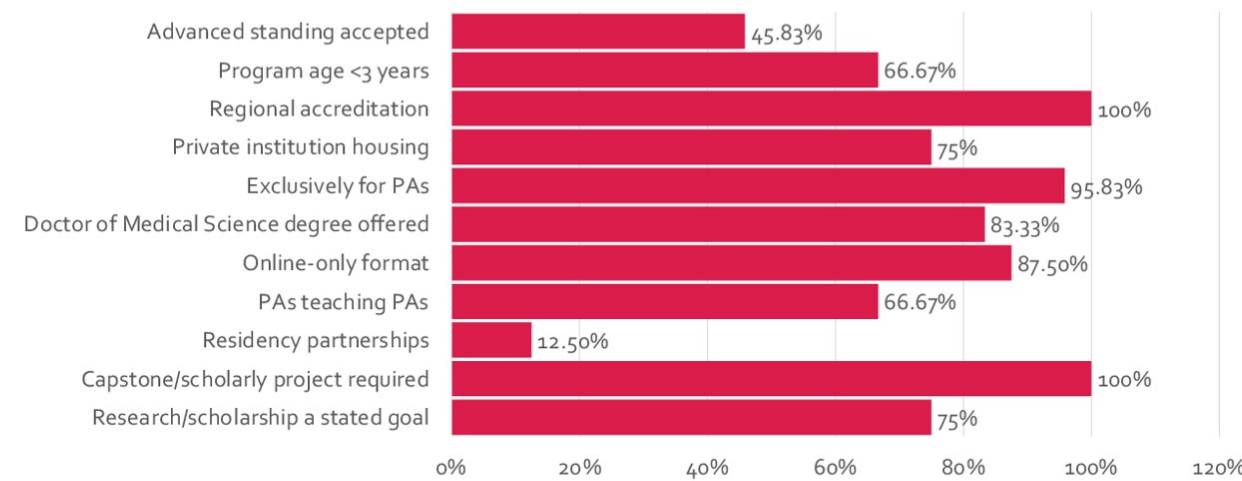
- Investigate the trends and characteristics of the currently available PA-specific doctoral programs.
- Examine the delivery of research and scholarly education in these programs.

Methodology

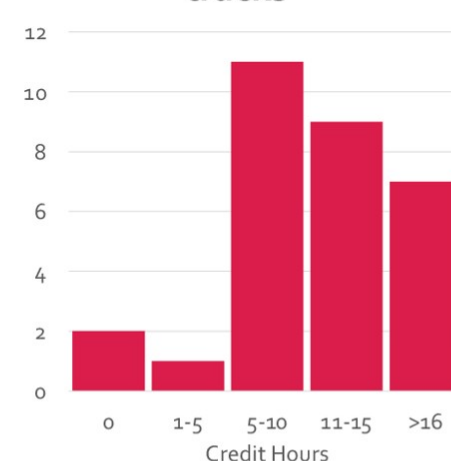
- A **mixed-methods** study involving qualitative analysis and website searches for the characteristics of PA-specific doctoral programs.
- Data were triangulated by examining each program's **public website and promotional materials**.
- When data unavailable, information was requested via e-mail.
- 24 programs** were identified & examined.

Results

Emerging characteristic themes among PA-specific doctoral programs



Research related credit hours across PA-specific doctoral programs and tracks*



- Prominent concentrations/tracks: **advanced clinical practice, leadership, education, public or global health.**

- Research related coursework ranged from **0-22** credit hours (mean **30.16%**, median **33.33%** of total credit hours).

- There was **significant variation** in course titles, course descriptions, and expected outcomes across programs.

*Individual tracks were included in this analysis separately for programs with differing total and/or research related credit hours across different tracks.

Conclusions

- PA doctoral education is **growing rapidly** with the majority of currently available programs emphasizing leadership, academia, and clinical practice advancement.
- Researchers became aware of **2 new programs** after analyzing the data.
- Although **research was stated as a goal** for many programs, there is a **lack of consistency** in the delivery of this curricular element.
- Future studies** should correlate this data with graduate outcomes.

References

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