REASON FOR THESIS TOPIC

• Currently a Pre-Physician assistant student
• Based on my experience as a Pre-PA student I would have appreciated such an extensive resource to make undergrad a little less difficult
• I am a proud PA advocate and would like to get the word out to students who do not know much about it
• Great opportunity to educate myself more PA profession
MAIN SECTIONS

• What a PA is
• Comparison with other professions
• History of the PA profession
• Admissions
• Training and education of a PA student
• Various specialties
• Salary information
• Certification maintenance education information
• Resource page
• Four interviews from a PA in a different specialty
WHAT IS A PA?

• A physician assistant (PA) is an interdependent semi autonomous clinician practicing medicine collaboratively with a physician

• examination, diagnosis, assisting in surgery, diagnostic testing, setting fractures, treatment (including referral), counseling patients in preventative health care and writing prescriptions.

• Median salary $90,000
WHAT IS A PA?

- Job Satisfaction is extremely high
- High demand
- Generalist model of training allows for greater flexibility to change specialties
- Allows for the physician to have a colleague close at hand
- Alleviates workload on medical team
- Improve access to healthcare
PROFESSION COMPARISON:

• Nurse Practitioner
  • Similar roles, often work together in medical team
  • Both diagnose, treat, prescribe medications and educate patients

• Medical Assistant
  • MA assumes both administrative and clinical duties
  • Answering telephones to prepping patients for exams
  • 1-2 year educational pathway

• Nurse
  • Nurses typically provide bedside care and pass meds but cannot prescribe
HISTORY

- 1960’s—shortage of medically trained personal identified by surgeon general
- Dr. Eugene Stead Jr. proposed PA curriculum to reduce shortage
- Approved and in 1967 first PA class graduated from Duke University
ADMISSIONS

• Ideal candidate
  • Experience-direct patient care
  • Personable
  • Good academic standing
  • Maturity
  • Understanding of PA profession
  • Leadership experience
  • Dedicated to cultural diversity
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

• Some schools require patient hours
• Two years college courses in basic sciences/behavioral sciences.
• CASPA requires
  • 3 letters of recommendations
  • Personal narrative
  • Some schools require GRE
  • Official transcripts
TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- PA school generally 24-27 months long
- First year didactic year spent in classroom
- Second year clinical rotations
- Common rotations include: family medicine, internal medicine, OB/GYN, pediatrics, general surgery, emergency medicine and psychiatry
- Program must be accredited by ARC to become licensed in the US
METHODS OF TEACHING

• Lecture-based learning is most common

• Problem-based learning (PBL) - Facilitators play minimal role, discussion is not guided

• Students presented a case study, expected to define problem, explore related issues and come up with problem resolution

• Organ-based approach
  • Takes a system and integrates physiology, anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, pharmacology and more
SPECIALTIES

• Over 60 different specialties
• Thesis focuses on five specialties:
  • Emergency medicine
  • Surgery
  • Obstetrics and gynecology
  • Internal medicine
  • Dermatology
EMERGENCY MEDICINE

- May work in critical care, urgent care, observation units, chest pain centers and trauma centers
- See a wide range of patients
- Therapeutic procedures include arthrocentesis, debridement of burns, lumbar puncture, interosseous needle placement and more
- Fast paced
SURGERY

- Sample of work environments: perioperative, intraoperative, post anesthesia care unit, surgical intensive care unit, step down unit, outpatient clinic
- Generally involved with abdominal procedures
- Surgical residencies available but not required
- Some duties include performing minor surgical procedures, rendering emergency care, conducting research, and prescribing medication
OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY (OB/GYN)

- Frequently encounter pap/pelvic and breast exams, gynecological complaints, family planning, menopause management and prenatal care
- Most common procedures performed include ultrasound, colposcopy and endometrial biopsy
- Many state laws do not address PAs and deliveries for unknown reasons
- Abortions: many states have physician only laws
INTERNAL MEDICINE

• Focus on treating patients who suffer from diseases effecting internal organs

• 17.2% of practicing PAs work in internal medicine

• Therapeutic procedures include obtaining blood gases, performing lumbar punctures, starting IV’s, drawing blood, central line placement, etc.

• Work in hospitals, group clinics, physician practices
DERMATOLOGY

• Trained on the job typically
• Two residency programs for Dermatological PAs
• May specialize in certain subspecialties such as acne, psoriasis, phototherapy, HIV, cosmetics or surgery
SALARY INFORMATION

- Dependent on PA scope of practice such as specialty, level of experience and environment
- American Academy of Physician Assistant census from Oct 2010-April 2011 reported:
  - Median salary for primary care PA: $85,000
  - Emergency medicine PA: $100,000
  - General surgery PA: $92,000
  - Surgery subspecialty PA: $97,000
  - Internal subspecialty PA: $87,200
  - Pediatric subspecialty PA: $88,000
CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE EDUCATION

- Consists of clinical and professional education acts that maintain, develop or increase knowledge, skills and professional performance and relationships that a PA uses to provide service for patients, the public and the profession
- Have to have a certain number of CME credits per two year period
- Random audit process of credits to strengthen value of profession
INTERVIEWS

• Conducted four interviews from PAs representing four different specialties
• Asked a wide range of questions to get an overall idea of what it is like in their specialty
• Who better to hear about the profession than the PAs themselves?
CONCLUSION

• These were the main points of the thesis
• The document can be used as a useful tool for students who wish to learn more about the profession
• I learned a great deal more in just about every section
• Questions?