Advanced Practice in Nuclear Medicine: Employer survey results

Methodology
A ten-question survey was distributed to employers or supervisors of nuclear medicine technologists in Arkansas to ascertain employer interest in an education program for advanced practice in nuclear medicine. Because there was no comprehensive list of employers or supervisors, the surveys were sent to nuclear medicine technologists in Arkansas who were in turn asked to give them to their supervisors. Instructions were provided to the technologists to ensure only one response per employer was received. The maximum number of employers was 86 according to information provided by the Arkansas Department of Health, Division of Radiation Control, and represented all the Radioactive Materials (RAM) Licenses in the state of Arkansas. Reminder notices were sent to those who had not responded by the deadline. Employers were allowed to return the surveys by fax or by mail in a postage paid return envelope. The survey was conducted in August and September, 2007.

Results
Summary: Twenty surveys were returned for a response rate of 23.3%. All sections of the state except Southeast Arkansas were represented among the respondents as were all types of facilities where nuclear medicine technologists and potentially advanced practice professionals might work.

Interest in an advanced practice program for nuclear medicine was high among respondents to the survey. Eighty percent agreed that there was need for a Master of Imaging Sciences degree program in Arkansas, and 70% indicated an interest in having a nuclear medicine technologist from their department become an advanced practice professional. Sixty percent were interested in being a clinical site for educating advanced practice professionals.

The following represents detailed results for each item on the survey.

1. Which of the following best describes your practice setting?
   
   - 50% Hospital setting, general nuclear medicine
   - 5% Outpatient Imaging Center Rural
   - 5% Outpatient Imaging Center Urban
   - 30% Cardiology Practice
   - 15% PET Imaging Practice
   - 10% Other (mobile cardiology)

2. How many nuclear medicine technologists are employed in your group department?
   
   - Average number 4
   - Median number: 3
   - Mode: 4
   - Range: 1-10
3. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in nuclear medicine?
   Average: 1.65 (range from 0 to 6)

4. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in cardiology?
   Average: 2.89 (range from 0 to 11)

5. Does your department currently employ a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant?
   30% Yes
   70% No

6. Do you agree there is a need for a Master of Imaging Sciences degree program that would prepare graduates in advanced practice in nuclear medicine in Arkansas?
   35% Strongly Agree
   45% Agree
   15% Undecided
   0% Disagree
   5% Strongly disagree

7. Would you be interested in having a nuclear medicine technologist in your department become an advanced practice nuclear medicine professional?
   45% Extremely interested
   25% Mildly interested
   25% Uncertain
   0% Mildly disinterested
   5% Not interested at all

8. Would you be interested in participating in the education of advanced practice nuclear medicine professionals by being a clinical site?
   35% Extremely interested
   25% Mildly interested
   25% Uncertain
   5% Mildly disinterested
   10% Not interested at all

9. Would you be interested in hiring a graduate from a program for advanced practice in nuclear medicine?
   35% Extremely interested
   20% Mildly interested
   35% Uncertain
   0% Mildly disinterested
   10% Not interested at all

10. In what part of the state is your facility located?
    15% Northwest Arkansas
    5% North Central Arkansas
    15% Northeast Arkansas
    50% Central Arkansas
    10% Southwest Arkansas
    0% Southeast Arkansas