Advanced Practice in Nuclear Medicine: Missouri Employer survey results

Methodology
A ten-question survey was distributed to employers or supervisors of nuclear medicine technologists in Missouri 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 NMTCB-certified nuclear medicine technologists in Missouri 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 243 according to information provided by a representative of Cardinal Health Nuclear Pharmacy and represented all the Radioactive Materials (RAM) Licenses in the state of Missouri. Information about the nature of the RAM licenses was very limited but at least 7 of them were issued to independent radiopharmacies and would therefore not be included as a potential employer. Although the remaining 235 RAM licenses were listed as being issued to medical facilities, they may not all represent potential employers, based on the number of technologists in the state and the reported average number of technologists at each institution. 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 January and February, 2008.

Results
Summary: Thirty-one surveys were returned for a response rate of 13.2%. All sections of the state except North Central Missouri 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 good among respondents to the survey. Forty-two percent agreed that there was need for an educational program in a nuclear medicine advanced practice in Missouri, and 52% indicated an interest in having a nuclear medicine technologist from their department become an advanced practice professional. Forty-five 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? (multiple answers by some respondents)
   - 58.1% Hospital setting, general nuclear medicine (n=18)
   - 12.9% Outpatient Imaging Center Rural (n=4)
   - 3.2% Outpatient Imaging Center Urban (n=1)
   - 19.4% Cardiology Practice (n=6)
   - 9.7% PET Imaging Practice (n=3)
   - 3.2% Other (temp agency)
2. How many nuclear medicine technologists are employed in your group department?
   Average number 4.34 (range 1-28)

3. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in nuclear medicine?
   Average: 1.96 (range from 0 to 11)

4. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in nuclear cardiology?
   Average: 1.65 (range from 0 to 7)

5. Does your department currently employ a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant?
   16.1% Yes (n=5)
   83.9% No (n=26)

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 Missouri?
   22.6% Strongly Agree (n=7)
   19.4% Agree (n=6)
   45.2% Undecided (n=14)
   6.4% Disagree (n=2)
   6.4% Strongly disagree (n=2)

7. Would you be interested in having a nuclear medicine technologist in your department become an advanced practice nuclear medicine professional?
   22.6% Extremely interested (n=7)
   29% Mildly interested (n=9)
   32.3% Uncertain (n=10)
   6.4% Mildly disinterested (n=2)
   9.7% Not interested at all (n=3)

8. Would you be interested in participating in the education of advanced practice nuclear medicine professionals by being a clinical site?
   22.6% Extremely interested (n=7)
   22.6% Mildly interested (n=7)
   32.3% Uncertain (n=10)
   9.7% Mildly disinterested (n=3)
   12.8% Not interested at all (n=4)

9. Would you be interested in hiring a graduate from a program for advanced practice in nuclear medicine?
   12.8% Extremely interested (n=4)
   29% Mildly interested (n=9)
   45.2% Uncertain (n=14)
   3.3% Mildly disinterested (n=1)
   9.7% Not interested at all (n=3)
10. In what part of the state is your facility located?
   - 9.7% Northwest Missouri (n=3)
   - 0% North Central Missouri
   - 16.1% Northeast Missouri (n=5)
   - 48.3% Central Missouri (n=15)
   - 22.6% Southwest Missouri (n=7)
   - 3.3% Southeast Missouri (n=1)