Advanced Practice in Nuclear Medicine: Missouri Physician survey results

Methodology
A nine-question survey was distributed to physicians who supervise nuclear medicine technologists in Missouri to ascertain physician interest in an education program for advanced practice in nuclear medicine. The surveys were sent to nuclear medicine technologists in Missouri who were in turn asked to give them to their supervising physicians. Instructions were provided to the technologists to ensure only one response per physician per institution 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. Physicians 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: Fifteen surveys were returned. All sections of the state except North Central Missouri were represented among the respondents as were most 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-seven percent agreed that there was need for an educational program in a nuclear medicine advanced practice in Missouri, and 53% of the respondents indicated an interest in either being a clinical training site or a preceptor.

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

1. Which of the following best describes your practice setting?
   - 46.7% Hospital setting, general nuclear medicine (n=7)
   - 6.6% Outpatient Imaging Center Rural (n=1)
   - 0.0% Outpatient Imaging Center Urban
   - 46.7% Cardiology Practice (n=7)
   - 0.0% PET Imaging Practice
   - 0.0% Other

2. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in nuclear medicine? 
   Average: 2.3 (range 0-15)

3. How many physicians in your group practice are board-certified in nuclear cardiology? 
   Average: 2.89 (range 0-15)
4. How long have you been in practice?
   Average: 18.8 years

5. 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?
   13.3% Strongly Agree (n=2)
   33.4% Agree (n=5)
   20.0% Undecided (n=3)
   20.0% Disagree (n=3)
   13.3% Strongly disagree (n=2)

6. Would you be interested in participating in the education of advanced practice nuclear medicine professionals as a lecturer or instructor?
   20.0% Extremely interested (n=3)
   6.7% Mildly interested (n=1)
   26.7% Uncertain (n=4)
   6.7% Mildly disinterested (n=1)
   40.0% Not interested at all (n=6)

7. Would you be interested in participating in the education of advanced practice nuclear medicine professionals as a preceptor or clinical mentor?
   13.2% Extremely interested (n=2)
   40.0% Mildly interested (n=6)
   13.2% Uncertain (n=2)
   6.7% Mildly disinterested (n=1)
   6.7% Not interested at all (n=4) (time constraints)

8. Would you be interested in hiring a graduate from a program for advanced practice in nuclear medicine?
   20.0% Extremely interested (n=3)
   20.0% Mildly interested (n=3)
   40.0% Uncertain (n=6)
   13.3% Mildly disinterested (n=2)
   6.7% Not interested at all (n=1)

9. In what part of the state is your facility located? (n=14)
   28.6% Northwest Missouri (n=4)
   0.0% North Central Missouri
   21.4% Northeast Missouri (n=3)
   28.6% Central Missouri (n=4)
   21.4% Southwest Missouri (n=3)
   0% Southeast Missouri