

Trends in Rehabilitation Services 2012

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Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to capture a baseline measurement of attitudes and workforce trends among physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists.

After analyzing the results of each specialty group, we found their satisfaction, preferences and outlooks to be aligned. Because of this alignment among the three therapy professions, we are reporting them as a whole, pointing out any significant differences in the areas in which they occurred.

As an organization placing rehabilitation professionals in healthcare facilities throughout the nation, Jackson Healthcare and Jackson Therapy Partners seek to perform this national survey annually to trend changes over the coming years.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online from September through November, 2012. Invitations for the survey were emailed to physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists who have been placed by Jackson Healthcare staffing companies and those who have not.

Respondents were self-selected with 590 respondents completing the survey. The error range for this survey at the 95th percent confidence level is +/- 4 percent.

Topics surveyed and included in this report:

- Employment demographics, including compensation
- Career and retirement plans
- Overall job satisfaction and drivers of satisfaction
- Preferred work environments
- Threats to job satisfaction

The questionnaire used for this survey can be downloaded [here](#).

A Snapshot of Survey Findings

1

Rehabilitation therapists are currently satisfied, with no short-term plans to change career paths

2

Productivity requirements and workloads most affect job satisfaction

3

Reimbursement and cost cuts pose greatest threats to the profession

Therapist Job Satisfaction & Workload

Rehabilitation therapists, overall, are satisfied with their jobs. Eighty percent of survey respondents report being satisfied or very satisfied with their current work environments. Only three percent report being very dissatisfied.

A key ingredient in physical, occupational and speech therapists' satisfaction is the nature of their work—they enjoy serving others and making a difference.

The top five drivers of therapist satisfaction are:

37%

Patient population/
making a difference

35%

Coworkers/
teamwork

16%

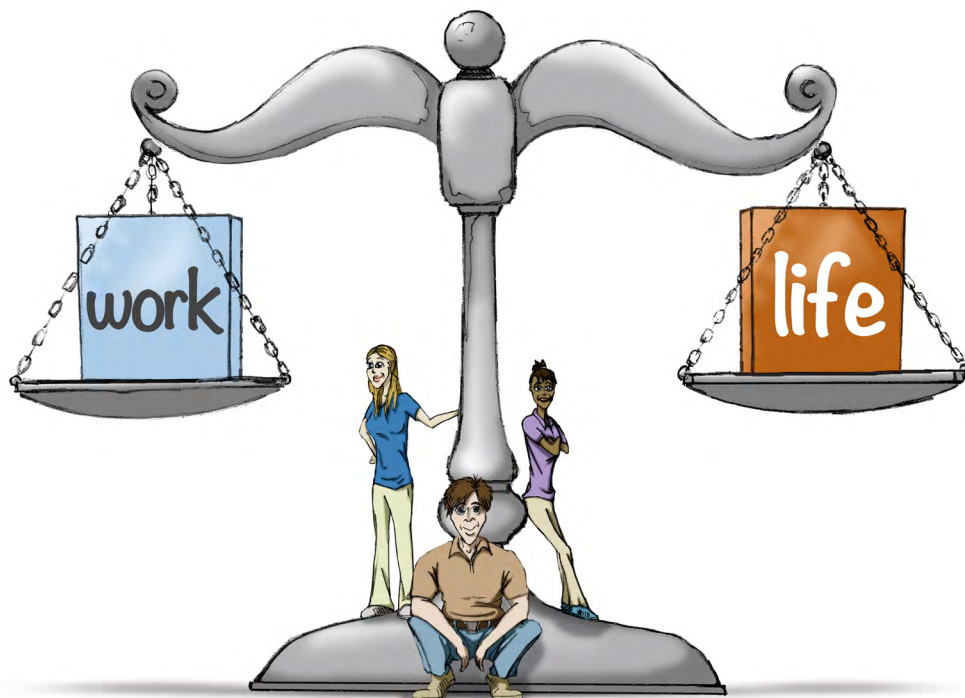
Work/life balance
/schedule

12%

Compensation/benefits

11%

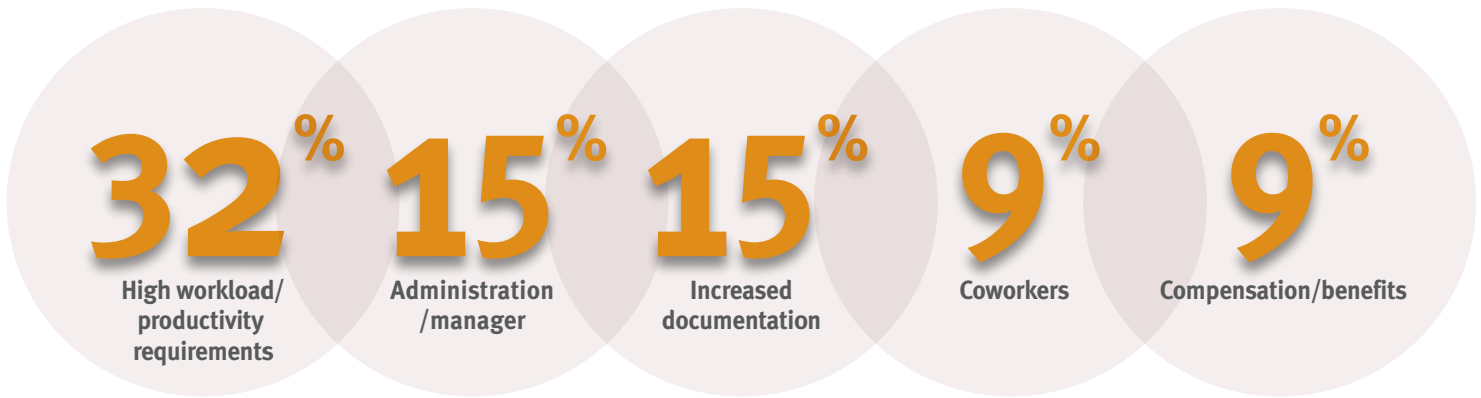
Quality of care/
patient outcomes



PTs, OTs & SLPs

A statistically significant difference in our findings—physical therapists are more likely to be very dissatisfied than occupational therapists.

The top five drivers of therapist dissatisfaction are:



Compensation

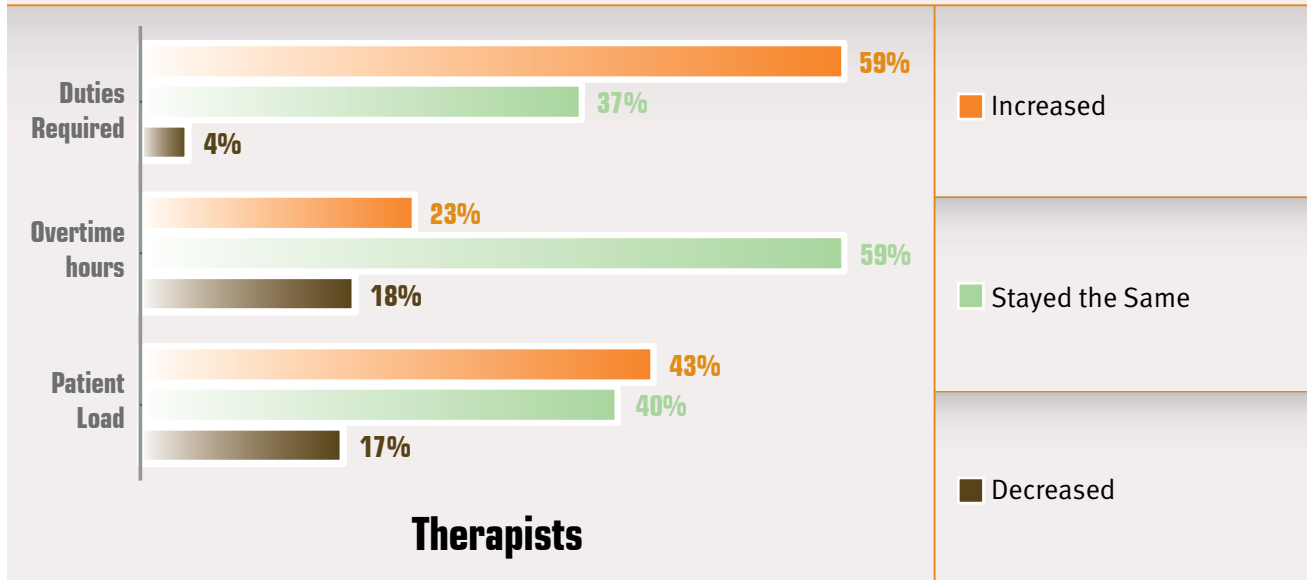
The majority of therapy respondents (43 percent) earn between \$50,000 and \$74,999 annually. Thirty percent earn more than \$75,000 and 27 percent earn less than \$50,000 per year.

Those employed by physicians are more likely than those employed by other therapists to earn greater than \$150,000 annually.

Workload

Regarding workload, the majority of therapists report their overtime hours have stayed the same in the past twelve months. However, 59 percent say their required duties have increased. Likewise, 43 percent report their patient loads have increased, while 40 percent say their loads have stayed the same.

Trends: Duties Increasing

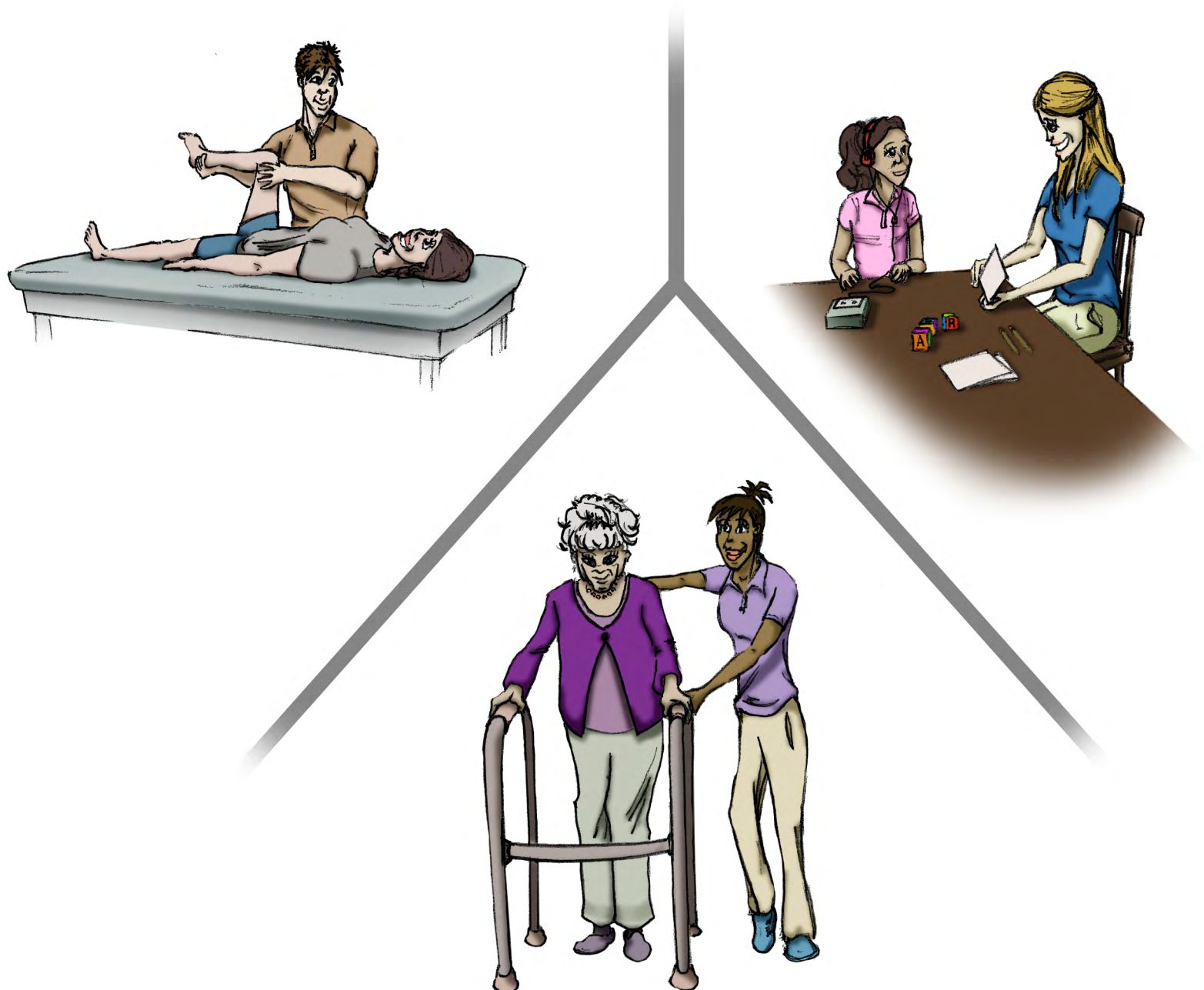


The average patient load among the three rehabilitation disciplines is ten patients. Sixty-nine percent of respondents report working overtime with the average maximum overtime worked per day being two-and-a-half hours.

With regard to team support, 46 percent of therapy respondents report the number of therapy assistants with whom they work has stayed the same, with only 15 percent saying that number increased. The number of therapists with whom they work has predominantly stayed the same (46 percent) or increased (30 percent).

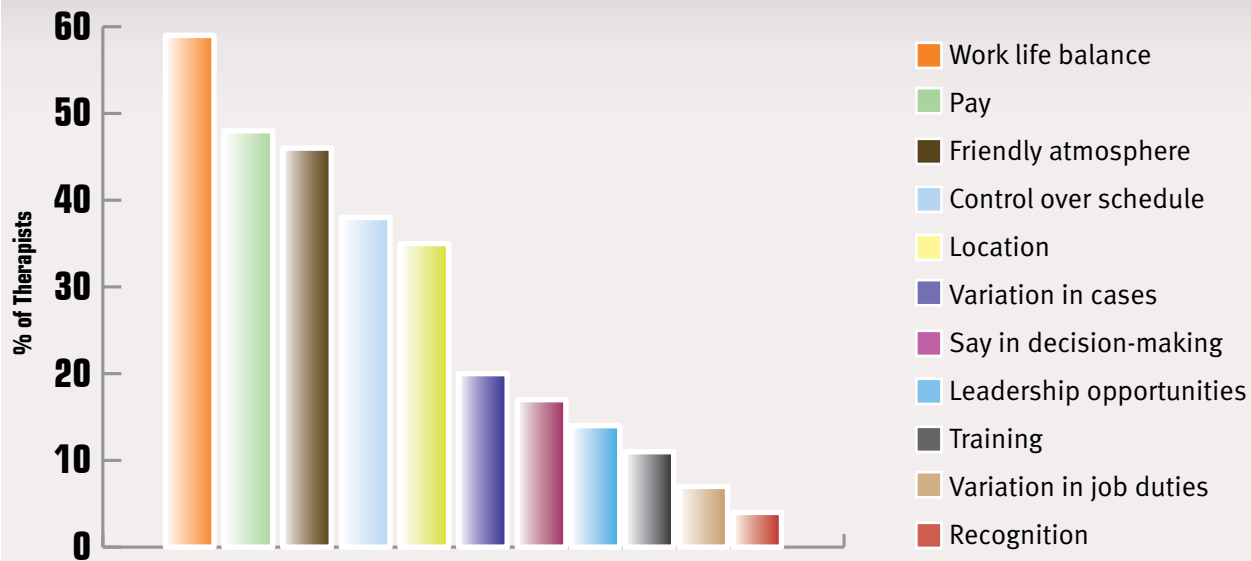
Therapist Preferences

The top three priorities physical, occupational and speech therapists seek in work assignments include work/life balance (59 percent), compensation (48 percent) and friendly atmosphere (46 percent). The chart on page 8 lists respondent assignment preferences.



Top Priorities in a Therapy Assignment

n = 603



Younger professionals (25 – 44 years old) are more likely than older therapists (65+) to seek work/life balance, while middle-aged professionals (those with 20 – 24 years experience) are more likely than professionals with 10 – 14 years experience to value friendly workplace environments most.

Work Environment

The top five work environments preferred by therapy respondents include:

- Specialized outpatient practice (16 percent)
- Public or private school (13 percent)
- Hospital setting (non-surgical, non-emergency) (11 percent)
- Rehabilitation center (inpatient) (11 percent)
- Office/clinic setting (10 percent)

Other work environments listed include home health, nursing homes, sports/fitness facilities or university settings.

Career Outlook & Future Risks

The vast majority of physical, occupational and speech therapists surveyed (89 percent) will continue in rehabilitation services through 2013. Six percent plan to transition to part-time, four percent are considering retiring or leaving therapy and only one percent will definitely retire by the end of next year.

In the next three-to-five years, about half (52 percent) plan to continue in their current roles, while nine percent seek leadership positions in rehabilitation services. Others plan to specialize (seven percent), earn doctorates (four percent), open their own clinics (four percent), among other options.

According to survey respondents, more than half plan to retire within the next 15 years. However, our data shows no cliff in which a significant number of physical, occupational and/or speech-language pathologists will exit the profession.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 39 percent increase in employment of [physical therapists](#) from 2010 and 2020. Employment of [occupational therapists](#) is estimated to increase 33 percent from 2010 to 2020. And [speech language pathology](#) jobs are expected to grow 23 percent.



Future Risks within Therapy Profession

Sixty-seven percent of respondents foresee risks within their profession. Male therapists were more likely to foresee risks to the profession.

Threats to reimbursement are the top concern for rehabilitation professionals. Thirty-five percent cite shrinking reimbursement as the greatest risk within the profession.

Other risks reported by respondents include layoffs, diminished need for therapists, decreased compensation and burnout.

Survey Demographics

Employment: See patients regularly

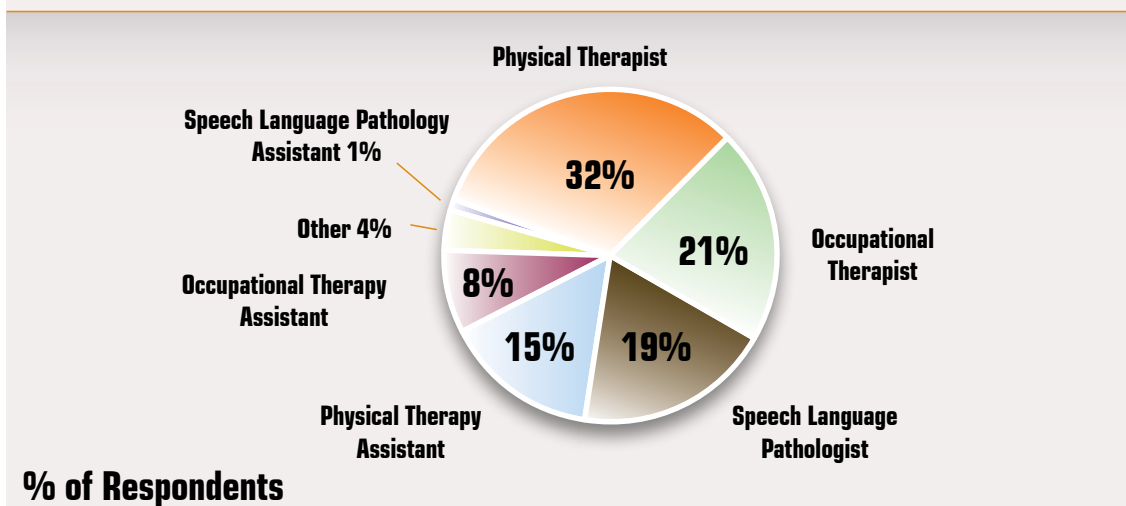
n = 678

Which of the following best describes your employment?

Nursing home / Assisted Living employee (W-2)	19%
Preschool, elementary or secondary school employee (W-2)	17%
Hospital employee (W-2)	12%
Independent contractor or travel therapist	12%
Outpatient clinic employee (W-2)	10%
Employee of a home health care provider (W-2)	6%
Inpatient rehabilitation center (W-2)	6%
Specialized outpatient clinic employee (W-2)	5%
Outpatient rehabilitation center (W-2)	3%
Government facility employee (W-2; i.e. government-owned hospital, clinic, department)	1%
Academia (W-2)	1%

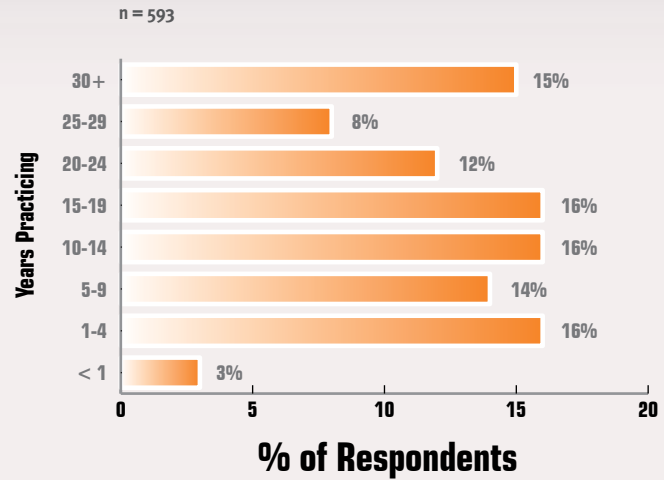
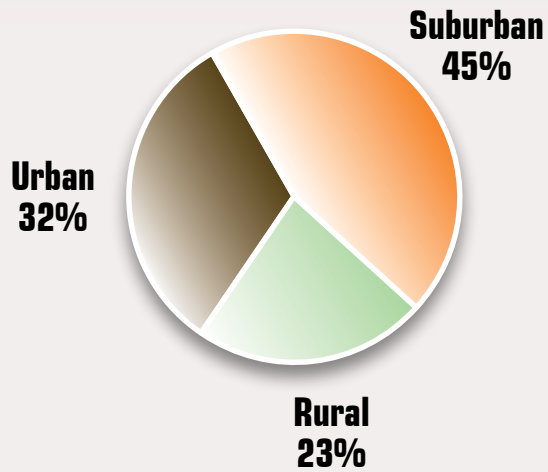
Title/Role

n = 595



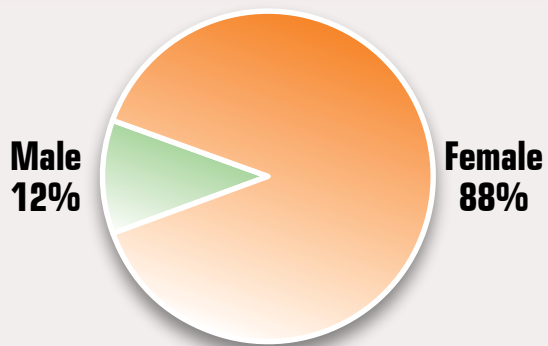
Geography & Length of Experience in Practice

n = 592



Age and Gender

n = 590



Under 25	2%
25-34	21%
35-44	26%
45-54	29%
55-64	20%
65+	2%

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[2012 Medical Practice & Attitude Report](#)

Vital Signs 2012

[A National Nursing Attitudes & Outlook Report](#)

[add link once live](#)

Nurses & Non-patient Care

[2011 Summary of Findings](#)

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