

Genomics and PA Certification

An Update from the
National Commission on Certification
of Physician Assistants

William Kohlhepp, MHA, PA-C
Immediate Past Chairman

Areas of Current or Future Activity

- Exam content
- Promotion
- Research

Integration of Genomics in NCCPA Exams



The Practice Analysis

- Scientific approach to determining the weight of content areas of NCCPA's exams
- Identifies what PAs are actually doing in practice
- Last conducted in 2004; next in 2009-2011
- Opportunity to ask more specific questions to tease out how genomics has been integrated in PA practice

The Content Blueprint



- Foundation from which exams are constructed
- Application of the information gleaned from the practice analysis
- Two dimensions
 - Organ systems
 - Knowledge, task and skill areas

Current Genomics Content



Do we have any questions on genetics or genomics?

Yes.

Current Genomics Content

Mapped content blueprint against GeneTests list of teaching cases.

- Diabetes mellitus
- Postpartum hemorrhage
- Coronary heart disease
- Huntington disease
- Sickle cell anemia
- Breast cancer
- Hearing loss
- Cystic fibrosis
- Renal failure

Current Genomics Content

Mapped content blueprint against the “Top Dozen.”

1. Breast cancer
2. Colorectal cancer
3. Other cancer
4. Children’s health
5. Family history
6. Making a referral
7. Genetics of common disease
8. Prenatal diagnosis
9. Pharmacogenetics
10. Thrombophilias
11. Psychiatric genetics
12. Nutrigenics

Current Genomics Content

- To what degree are we covering those areas?
- We don't know...yet.
- Beginning to code new items with a genetics code when applicable.
- Conducting review of item bank and are including this step in that review.
- Will know more next year.

Further Integration of Genomics in Exams

- Adding a new item writer with experience in genomics in 2008.
 - Generate new items
 - Review existing items
- Will include someone with genomics experience on next practice analysis committee.
 - Ensure that we're asking the right questions to find out what PAs are doing in this area.



Promotion of Genomics

Educating the NCCPA Board

- First step for us: Bringing the rest of the organization along.
- Written reports to the NCCPA Board in May and August.
- More in-depth presentation in November.

Promoting the Family History Project

- Existing Family History Project a natural entry point for PAs.
- Featuring the Web tool in the “Don’t Miss” section of the NCCPA Foundation Web site (www.paexcellence.org).
- Willing to do more in this area if it seems appropriate.

Promotion of Genomics Through Other NCCPA Projects

- Procedures logging project in development and will use CPT and ICD9 codes.
- “Pedigree” not among them, but many address taking histories.
- Reviewing definition of PA competencies for gaps.



Research

New Opportunities in Research

- NCCPA Foundation research grants program
- \$5k-\$10k grants to support research (\$50k total per year)
- This topic could be featured as a “topic of interest” in the next RFP.
- Looking for ideas for research topics while we’re here to seed the RFP.



Questions?