Characteristics of Anesthesiology Program Directors: A Follow-up Study

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The administrative responsibilities of the anesthesiology core residency program director (PD) have evolved as the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) implemented the outcomes project and the Next Accreditation System (NAS). We published a manuscript that defined the population of anesthesiology core PDs in 2010 (Long et al. 2010). PD characteristics we reported on included age, academic rank, gender, appointment duration, board certification status and whether the department chair also served as PD. The purpose of this study is to determine contemporary PD characteristics and compare them to data reported in our earlier study. Data were gathered through review of the ACGME and American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA) websites, state medical board licensure websites, program websites and employment of common electronic search engines.

We identified 146 ACGME accredited programs for inclusion in this study, compared to 131 programs in our prior study. One hundred twenty-eight (87.67%) programs have continued accreditation status, 6 (4.11%) are operating under initial accreditation and 7 (4.8%) are on the pre-accreditation pathway. Current anesthesiology residency PDs range in age from 35 to 74 years with no change in median age (52 years) since 2010. Women currently represent 45/146 (30.8%) anesthesiology residency PDs, compared to 37/131 (28.2%) in our previous study. The majority of PDs continue to hold senior academic rank (professor or associate professor; 66.1% current study, 67% 2010 study). Median appointment duration is currently 4 years compared to 3.7 years in 2010. The PD currently also serves as department chair in only 5.4% (7/129) of anesthesiology programs, decreased from 24/131 (18.3%) in the 2010 study.

The number of anesthesiology core residency PDs also serving as department chair continues to decrease. This finding is consistent with further distinction and recognition of the role of PD, as proposed in our 2010 study. The representation of women among anesthesiology PDs increased from the prior study by approximately 2.6%. This may correlate with an increase in the percent of anesthesiology residents identifying as female from 34.9% in 2007 (Long et al. 2010) to 37% in 2014 (Kranner et al. 2016). There continues to be a high rate of PD turnover which may represent burnout syndrome. Fifty-two percent of anesthesiology PDs were reported to be at high risk for burnout in a 2011 study by De Oliveira et al.

De Oliveira, GS et al. (2011) J Clin Anesth 23:176-182