

# Discussing the Unique Challenges, Requirements, and Rewards of Postdoctoral Training

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Achievement of Educational Goals, Objectives, and  
Competencies

## Presenters

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## Presenters

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## Outline

- Introduction and Update—Rick
- Specialization Issues—Brad
- VA Expansion, Uniform Notification Date/APPCN Match, Clinical/Research Mix in Postdoctoral Training— Jeanette
- Challenges and Rewards— Rick
- Discussion and Ideas-- ALL

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

- Approved by APA Commission on Accreditation—
  - Postdoctoral residencies may be accredited as programs preparing individuals for practice at an advanced level in the traditional practice areas of Clinical, Counseling, or School Psychology.

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

- Postdoctoral residencies may also be accredited in specialty practice areas. Those specialty areas that have met the guidelines to be included in the scope of accreditation are as follows:
  - Clinical Child Psychology
  - Clinical Health Psychology
  - Clinical Neuropsychology
  - Family Psychology
  - Forensic Psychology
  - Rehabilitation Psychology

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

### ➤ Accredited Postdoctoral Programs

- 26 Traditional Practice Programs -5 are part of integrated practice program
  - 6 with in-depth training in specialty practice area of clinical neuropsychology
  - 2 with in-depth training in specialty practice area of clinical child psychology

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

### ➤ Accredited Postdoctoral Programs

- 23 Specialty Practice Programs
  - 4 Clinical Child Psychology -3 are part of integrated practice program
  - 6 Clinical Health Psychology -1 is part of an integrated practice program
  - 12 Clinical Neuropsychology -7 are part of an integrated practice program
  - 1 Rehabilitation Psychology

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

- Accredited Postdoctoral Programs
  - 7 Integrated Practice Programs
    - 2 clinical child psychology and clinical neuropsychology
    - 4 clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology
    - 1 clinical child psychology, clinical health psychology, and clinical neuropsychology

## Update on Postdoctoral Training

- APPIC Postdoctoral Programs
  - 108 member programs/ 30 accredited
- APPIC 2007-2008 Mean Salary Data
  - Accredited programs - \$41,600
  - Non-accredited programs - \$33,300
  - VA (with locality variations) - \$43,039
  - Military - \$55,000

## Postdoctoral Training Arena

- Training ranges from informal clinical positions, informal and formal research postdocs, to postdoctoral programs preparing for advanced practice in traditional or specialty practice areas.
- There is not the sense of shared expectations or agreed upon conventions as at internship level of training.

## Postdoc Funding

- CMS funding— from the Allied Health Professional Training funds—not GME funding—must be accredited program
  - 3 postdoc training sites currently have funding- Hurley Medical Center (Stucky); UT Galveston (Baker), Rehab Institute of Michigan (Hanks)
- VA Expansion

## Issue

- Traditional, Specialty, and Integrated Practice postdoctoral programs.

## Specialty Postdocs

- Specialties Currently Accreditable:
  - Clinical Child Psychology
  - Clinical Health Psychology
  - Clinical Neuropsychology
  - Family Psychology (added April 2008)
  - Forensic Psychology (added April 2008)
  - Rehabilitation Psychology

## How Specialties Become Accreditable

- Following IR C-11(b), the specialty must:
  1. Be recognized as a specialty by the Commission on the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP) of APA **or** by ABPP, **and**
  2. Hold membership in the Council of Specialties (CoA), **and**
  3. Provide the CoA with specialty-specific postdoctoral education and training guidelines endorsed by the CoS.

## How do I keep up with new specialty guidelines?

- As CoA receives new guidelines from CoS, the name of the specialty is added to the list of accreditable specialties on the CoA website.
- Specialty guidelines endorsed by CoS are available through CoS.
- CoA does not critically review specialty guidelines received from CoS.

## How Specialty Postdocs are Reviewed by CoA

- Accreditation decisions made based on the program's compliance with the G&P and the postdoctoral training guidelines of the designated specialty area.
- One site visitor has expertise in the specialty practice area.

## Integrated Practice Programs

- Combinations of two or more traditional and/or specialty practice programs (note the plural).
- Prepare a single self-study, with separate sections as needed (e.g., Domains B, C, and F).
- CoA's accreditation decisions are program-based, and thus can differ across programs.

## Emphasis Areas within a Traditional Program

- Traditional or specialty areas may offer training in areas of emphasis.
- Areas of emphasis are not considered specialties and do not have to meet the requirements of IR C-11(b).
- Areas of emphasis may be described in all public materials except certificates of completion.

## Integrated Practice Programs vs. Emphasis Areas within one Program

- The existence of accreditable specialty training guidelines does not eliminate use of the same term as an emphasis area within a traditional program.
- Strictly speaking, training sites may choose either option, if specialty guidelines exist.
- However, generally speaking, we recommend that programs choose the option that best fits their program.

## Issue

- Expansion of postdoctoral training in VA in 2007
- Uniform Notification Date for postdoctoral offers
- APPCN Match
- Research activity and accreditation

## Expansion of Postdoctoral Funding by VA

- VA is largest single employer of psychologists in the world. Current total is approximately 2,300.
- VA's Office of Mental Health Services estimates that the optimal number of psychologists is 3,700.
- In 2007, VA expanded funding for postdoctoral training, awarding 98 new postdoctoral fellowship programs
  - 61 positions in 26 new programs
  - 37 positions in 17 existing programs

## Expansion of Postdoctoral Funding by VA

- New positions added 20% to total APPIC postdoctoral positions, and 95% to total VA postdoctoral positions.
- VA constitutes 30% of total APPIC postdoctoral positions (~577 total positions in 2007)
- VA's Office of Academic Affiliations requires that new postdoctoral programs become accredited in order to maintain their funding.
  - May entail need for additional site visitors.

## Brief History of Uniform Notification Date (UND)

- 1990s – 9 VA geropsychology postdoctoral programs briefly adopted a Uniform Notification Date (UND)
  - Early system was abandoned due to making offers later than nonparticipating programs and wanting to make offers to current interns
- 2004 – San Francisco Bay Area UND organized by Russell Lemle at SFVA
  - 15 participating programs with 80 positions

## Brief History of UND (cont.)

- 2007 – Addition to Northern CA programs of 27 other VA programs nationwide
  - UND of February 28, 2008 worked fairly smoothly
- 2008 – Currently 40 clinical programs (non-VA and VA) with 125 fellowship positions will participate in 2009 UND
  - Thanks to Dr. Lemle who collected this information for an upcoming APPIC newsletter article (Lemle, 2008)

## Pros and Cons of UND

### Pros

- Coordinated date allows programs and applicants to choose the best choice among all options
- Flexibility for some programs to make earlier offers but applicants accept or decline by UND
- Benefits to postdoctoral programs without an in-house internship program

### Cons

- Non-participating programs “jumping ahead” of UND
- Overlap in time with internship selection
- Overlap of applicants with research fellowships with different timing of funding and offers
- Greater variance among postdoc programs

## APPIC Postdoctoral Survey 2007

- UND and Match widely and well-accepted at internship level
- 40% of postdoctoral members do not want APPIC to provide any coordination of postdoctoral offers or acceptances
- 32% would like APPIC to provide such coordination, but not provide a formal Match
- 11% would like APPIC to provide a national postdoctoral Match

## Overview of APPCN Match

- APPCN organized a UND from 1993 to 2000.
- Matching program modeled after APPIC's internship match: 2001 to present.
- APPCN Membership: 2-year postdoc; at least 50% clinical, 10% research, 10% didactics; Training Director is board-certified through ABPP/ABCN.
- All APPCN programs participate in match.
- Non-APPCN programs that meet Houston Conference guidelines may also participate (must be two-year program and meet above percentages).

## Overview of APPCN Match

- 2008 Match: 112 applicants, 82 positions
- Match rate: 69% of applicants, 94% of positions
- Average Number of Rankings Per Applicant
  - Matched Applicants: 5.5
  - Unmatched Applicants: 3.3
- Beginning in the 2008-2009 match, APPCN plans to add a new category to the match to allow neuropsychology positions that offer less than 50% clinical time into the match.
- More programs = more opportunities for applicants

## UND and Match

- The UND of VA and Northern California programs is not meant for neuropsychology postdoc positions.
- All programs with neuropsychology positions are encouraged to take part in the APPCN matching program for those positions. In 2008, most new VA programs participated in the APPCN match.
- APPCN supports expanding the matching program to interested constituencies outside neuropsychology.
- UND's and Matches within postdoctoral training are an evolving area.

## Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accreditation is intended to “improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice” (Domain B-1)
- But accreditation is not intended for postdoctoral residencies with a primary research focus
  - Domain A-1 – “preparation for practice at an advanced level in a substantive traditional or specialty practice area in professional psychology”
  - Domain B-2(b) – “the primary training method is supervised service delivery in direct contact with service recipients”

## Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accredited programs can have research requirements or expectations but must be less than 50% of total time
- Research is included in one of the content areas in Domain B-3, including
  - strategies of scholarly inquiry
  - organization, management and administration issues pertinent to psychological service delivery and practice, training, and research

## Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accredited programs must have the majority of time in “service delivery” activities (minimum of 51% time)
- Definition of “service delivery” and “service recipients”? (see competency content areas in Domain B-3(b))
  - Clinical activity as part of research projects (e.g., interviews, therapy, assessment)
  - Supervision and teaching
  - Consultation
  - Program development and evaluation

## Research Activity and Accreditation

- Postdoctoral programs with research requirements and expectations must
  - Demonstrate that the program meets Domain A-1 (practice area) and B-2(b) (service delivery)
  - Document amount of time residents spend in service delivery activities, including direct clinical contact with clients/patients and other service delivery such as supervision, consultation, and program evaluation
  - Document research-related clinical activities
  - Document non-service delivery research activities such as data analysis, grant-writing, and preparation of research papers (less than 50% of total time)

## Research Activity in Postdoctoral Programs

- APPIC postdoctoral members reported on the percentage of time fellows spent in research activity (2007 Member Survey)
  - 59% of programs – 0-10%
  - 22% of programs – 11-20%
  - 20% of programs – between 21% and 50%

## Challenges & Rewards Applicant perspective

- Challenges
  - Why complete a postdoctoral program?
  - Is it really necessary or desirable?
  - What kind of postdoc should I pursue?
- Rewards
  - Postdoc licensure requirements
  - Early career mentoring and track record
  - Board eligibility assured for ABPP affiliated boards

## Challenges & Rewards Program perspective

### ➤ Challenges

- Why sponsor a postdoctoral program?
- What kind of postdoctoral program?
- How can this be funded?
- Attracting postdocs more difficult than internship.
  - 2007-2008 APPIC Statistics- mean applications APA accredited programs -internship =92, postdoc =35; mean applications per slot- internship=18, postdoc= 5

## Challenges & Rewards Program perspective

### ➤ Rewards

- Opportunity to train at more advanced level.
- Recognition by institution for quality and professional standing of program
- Enhance continuum of training from internship through advanced specialty training.