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Orthopaedic Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Program Mentoring Structure: A Survey of Program Directors

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Residency & fellowship mentoring is most often:

- scheduled weekly (63%)
- in 4-hour blocks (44%)
- with multiple assigned mentors (65%)
- in-person (100%), virtually (42%), synchronous (54%)
- by mentors with clinical specialization (73%)



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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is a required component of physical therapy residency and fellowship training, though gaps in our understanding of mentoring delivery exist. The purpose of this study was to better understand the structure, timing, and delivery of mentoring and the role mentors and program directors (PDs) play in orthopaedic physical therapy residency and fellowship programs.

METHODS

A practice committee of the AOPT Orthopaedic Residency & Fellowship Special Interest Group sent a 48-item mentoring structure survey to 135 orthopaedic residency and fellowship program directors (PDs) via Red Cap on three separate occasions over two months. Descriptive statistics and survey responses were analyzed.

RESULTS

PDs submitted 32 surveys (23.7% response rate). Programs most often schedule 1:1 mentoring weekly (63%) or several days/week (25.9%); most often in four-hour blocks (44.4%) for a mean of 163.7 (51.6) hours. Non-1:1 mentoring was variably scheduled across programs for 25.5 (27.7) hours. Mentee feedback was delivered before, during, or after the mentoring session verbally 92.3%, and was shared in front of the patient often 26.9%, sometimes 61.5%, and rarely 11.5%. The COVID-19 pandemic influenced mentoring delivery with 53.8% using increased virtual mentoring, 19.2% using increased asynchronous mentoring, and 42.3% decreasing mentoring hours during the pandemic. Mentor requirements and incentives varied across programs.

CONCLUSION

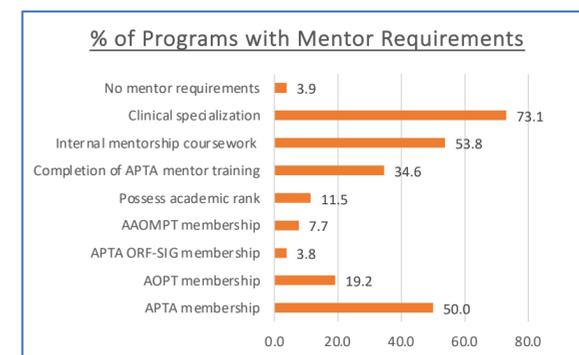
- Mentoring is delivered using a variety of methods with varied mentor requirements.
- Mentors and program directors cross-cover multiple positions in residency and fellowship programs.
- Beyond blocked time, incentives for mentor involvement are largely intrinsic in nature.

TABLE 1

| Characteristics of Participants (n=32) | Number | % |
|--|------------|------|
| Program Director | 26 | 81.3 |
| Program Coordinator | 9 | 28.1 |
| Mentor | 30 | 93.8 |
| Number of years involved in program | 6.2 (3.2) | |
| Years as a practicing physical therapist | 15.9 (8.4) | |
| Gender (female) | 16 | 50.0 |
| Age (range 30-65) | 40.0 (8.8) | |
| Specializations (e.g. OCS, SCS, etc) | 30 | 93.8 |
| Fellow AOMPT | 10 | 31.3 |
| Residency Trained | 14 | 43.8 |
| Fellowship Trained | 10 | 31.3 |

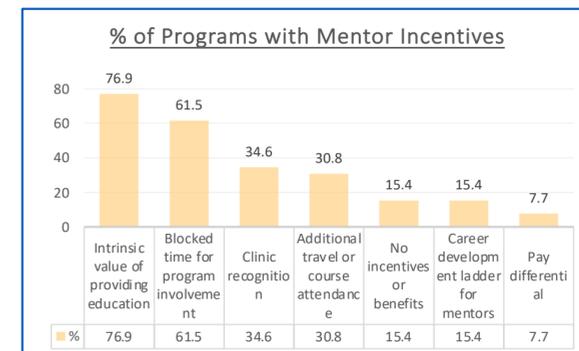
Demographic characteristics of survey participants

GRAPH 1



Percent of programs with mentor requirements

GRAPH 2



Percent of programs with mentor incentives

- Use QR code for references and additional survey findings