



# IMPACTS OF PRODUCTIVITY STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS ON AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPISTS



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## Introduction

Productivity demands and documentation have been studied for allied health professions including chiropractors (DC) and occupational therapists (OT) in the United States (US) (2, 7). Only one regional study assessed the impact of documentation requirements on physical therapists in the US (PT) (3). The purpose of this study was to evaluate variables of documentation standards and productivity requirements in physical therapy and their effects on current/career job satisfaction.

## Methods

- 116 PT (Age =  $54.8 \pm 4.5$  years) participated. Subjects included 78 women and 37 men, from 39 states in the US. Subjects provided written informed consent prior and the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board.
- The survey instrument, National Role Delineation of Physical Therapists, was adopted from a previous study of PT (3). This qualitative, cross-sectional conventional mail survey instrument was used to characterize documentation practices and productivity requirements for PT in the US.
- Surveys instruments were sent via conventional mail to 500 PT whose information was obtained from the APTA. The survey contained 33 open-ended and fixed-response questions, resulting in 452 pages of data.
- Descriptive data were analyzed, using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 27.0).
- Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationship between subject variables and measures of job satisfaction.
- Answers to open-ended questions were content-analyzed according to previously published recommendations (4).

## Results

- Minutes spent documenting was correlated with current ( $r=-0.37$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and career ( $r=-0.25$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) job satisfaction.
- Minutes spent documenting was correlated with career compromises physical health ( $r=0.35$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), mental health ( $r=0.31$ ,  $p=0.003$ ), and relationships ( $r=0.29$ ,  $p=0.004$ ).

## Results (Continued)

- Minutes spent documenting was correlated with productivity demands ( $r=0.34$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and perceived manageable productivity demands ( $r=-0.24$ ,  $p=0.033$ ).
- Fifty-three PT identified that they performed documentation within a typical work week.
- Documentation/paperwork was one of the top five most-consuming job responsibilities 71 times.
- Documentation/paperwork was the least enjoyable job responsibility ( $n=86$ ).
- Table 1 depicts where PT perform documentation daily.
- Table 2 demonstrates reported productivity standards.
- Figure 1 indicates the degree to which PT agree productivity demands are manageable.
- Figure 2 explains the degree to which PT feel productivity demands decrease job satisfaction.

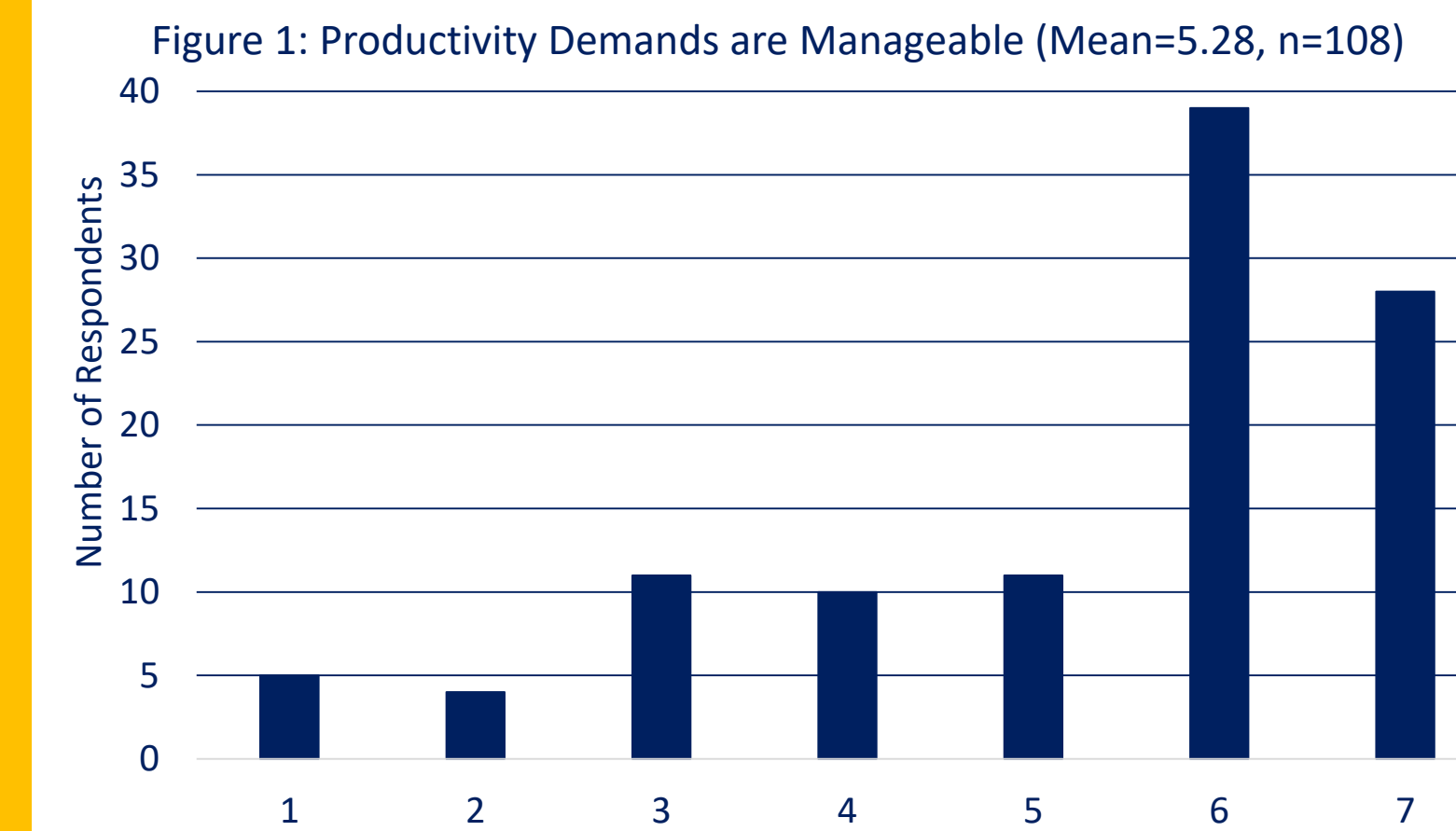
Table 1: Documentation location ( $n=116$ )

Type	Number
At work	91
During lunch	45
At home	37
During breaks	21
Not required	13
During patient visit	3

Table 2: Productivity Standards ( $n=116$ )

Higher Order Theme	Number
None	36
75-90% productivity	23
Other	22
45-60 minutes / session	15
10-15 visits / day	14
30-45 minutes / session	8
50-70% productivity	8
1-2 patient / hour	7
3-4 CPU / visit	3
50-60 minutes / evaluation	3
9-13 visits / patient	2

## Results (Continued)



## Discussion

This is the first study to assess variables of documentation and productivity and their relationship to job and career satisfaction of PT in the US. Minutes spent documenting has an inverse relationship with job and career satisfaction, as previously shown with OT (7). This finding was present, despite increased efficacy compared to previous paper-based documentation methods (5). The current study demonstrated that minutes spent documenting correlates to factors other than job and career satisfaction such as compromising aspects of well-being. This finding was dissimilar to studies of OT and PT in the US (7, 3). Results of this study demonstrated 57% and 32% of PT in the US perform documentation during lunch/breaks and at home, respectively. These data may explain why 74% of PT in the US identified documentation as their least-favorite job responsibility. Maintaining effective documentation is important for ensuring compliance,

## Discussion (Continued)

quality plans of care, and evidence-based practice, indicating a need for this job responsibility to be viewed as less aversive (1). This current study is the first to assess productivity demands and their effects on job and career satisfaction. The degree to which PT agree productivity demands are manageable has an inverse relationship with minutes spent documenting. Transition from paper-based to electronic health records led to increased productivity output and patient interaction time (5). Current results found 68% of participants were not required to measure productivity, dissimilar to a study of rehabilitation careers where 74% of participants possessed formal goals (6). The most commonly-reported productivity goals in the current study were 75-90% of work-day treating patients, 45-60 minutes/session and 10-15 visits/day. Current findings show 62% of PT in the US mostly/entirely agree productivity demands were manageable. Only 17% of PT in the US mostly/entirely agree productivity demands decrease job satisfaction. Few PT (9%), compared to OT in the US (18%) cited productivity demands as their least enjoyable task.

## Conclusion

Productivity demands are mostly perceived as manageable and do not typically negatively impact job or career satisfaction. These data can be used by current and prospective students as well as practicing PT to determine the relationship between documentation, productivity requirements, and aspects of well-being. More research can be done to determine further reasons documentation is the least enjoyable job responsibility and how to improve perception.

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