

In Reference to: “The Current State of Advanced Practice Provider Fellowships in Hospital Medicine: A Survey of Program Directors.” Be Careful What We Call It

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I read with interest the recent article by Klimpl et al. “The Current State of Advanced Practice provider Fellowships in Hospital Medicine: A Survey of Program Directors.”¹ I appreciate the description of the variation in training as well as the discussion points about the driving forces behind the training programs. However, I am concerned about the terminology used, specifically “fellowship,” and how it can create confusion for patients. Accredited medical/surgical fellowships have a precise meaning and convey an assurance of standardized additional training. Even many non-Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education fellowships

within a single field have a shared curriculum. Using the same terminology for other medical providers may be seen as equating their post-training competency with physicians who have completed fellowship training. As the authors point out, there is a wide divergence in the clinical experience required to become a licensed practitioner among NPs, PAs, and physicians. As such, using the same terminology for their respective training programs makes it difficult for the public to differentiate between them.

Disclosures: Dr. Rauch has no conflicts to declare.

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Reference

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In Reply to “Be Careful What We Call It”

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I appreciate the input from Dr. Rauch regarding the terminology of “fellowship” in regards to APP postgraduate training programs.¹ When researching these programs, the overwhelming majority we surveyed described themselves as fellowships. Because of this, we chose to use the same nomenclature. The survey we used was meant to explore and quantify certain discreet components of program creation and execution, and further study would be needed to shed light on how they name themselves.

While it is not known if the term “fellowship” in this context would be confusing to patients, it does seem that the ideal terminology has not yet been clarified. In 2014, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners released a position statement that, for NP postgraduate training programs, the term “fellow-

ship” should be used above other terms.² We were unable to find a similar position statement regarding postgraduate physician assistant training, but did note that the Association of Post-Graduate PA Programs website uses the terms “residency” and “fellowship” seemingly interchangeably.³ As most of the programs that we surveyed train mixed groups of nurse practitioners and physician assistants, developing unified language will be an important step in the future.

Disclosures: Dr. Klimpl has no conflicts to declare

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