

Workforce and Salary Survey Trends: Opportunities and Challenges for the American Association of Medical Dosimetrists



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ABSTRACT

The American Association of Medical Dosimetrists (AAMD) designed and directed 2 surveys of the AAMD membership. The first was in 2011 and the second in 2014. There were a number of questions common to both surveys, and this article seeks to evaluate these common questions to determine trends among the professional membership of the AAMD. It is demonstrated that the observed trends are consistent with the goals and objectives established by the leadership of the AAMD and the Medical Dosimetry Certification Board (MDCB) for the medical dosimetry community. In addition, certain challenges and opportunities involving the scope of practice for the medical dosimetry profession are discussed.

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Introduction

This report is intended to review some of the data respecting the medical dosimetry profession collected by the American Association of Medical Dosimetrists (AAMD) surveys in 2011 and 2014.^{1,2} Although the data are mostly very consistent between the 2 reports, an analysis of several data snapshots reveals some interesting trends. In the discussion, an evaluation of various new challenges and opportunities facing medical dosimetry, including the formal designation of “Physics Assistant” by some regulatory bodies, is examined.

Medical dosimetrists receive their basic education in a technological or scientific discipline whereas their practical training deals with the clinical applications of dosimetric principles. Medical dosimetrists work in diverse health care organizations providing therapeutic clinical services to oncology patients. In radiation oncology, medical dosimetrists create and monitor patient treatment plans and provide oversight to high-level treatment procedures.

The medical dosimetry profession is small and somewhat obscure. Medical dosimetrists' work is not well understood by the public or by health care clinicians with whom they work, especially by individuals outside of radiation oncology. Although health provider systems do not require large numbers of medical

dosimetrists, the services of medical dosimetrists are essential and in demand. Medical dosimetry is a stand-alone profession, meaning medical dosimetrists alone are responsible for the academic requirements and training of their professionals.

The guidelines for education and training of medical dosimetrists are changing to align with the new certification requirements recently proposed by the Medical Dosimetry Certification Board (MDCB). The new education and training requirements are slated to become effective in 2017.

Methods and Materials

In 2011, a comprehensive workforce survey of medical dosimetrists was designed by the advisory committee appointed by the AAMD to oversee this project. The content of the questionnaire was determined after completion of a comprehensive literature review, after examining historical data on the medical dosimetry profession, and after conducting extensive interviews with currently practicing medical dosimetrists, directors of medical dosimetry education and training programs, industry representatives working with medical dosimetrists, government regulators, the professional association, the certification board, and other stakeholders with an interest in medical dosimetry. The advisory committee made adjustments to survey content and format and finalized the survey instrument in December 2010.

Overall, 2246 members of AAMD were solicited to participate in the survey. The survey was closed on August 21, 2011, with 968 responses. These responses were evaluated for duplications, completeness of response including salary information, and appropriate identification.

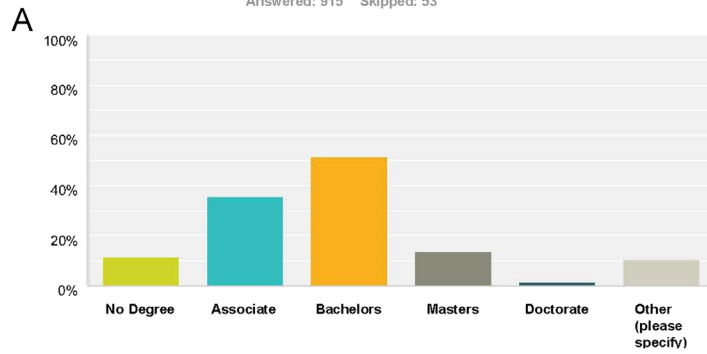
In 2014, a salary survey of medical dosimetrists was designed by the advisory committee appointed by the AAMD to oversee this project. The content of the questionnaire was again determined after completion of a comprehensive literature review, after examining historical data on the medical dosimetry profession, and after conducting extensive interviews with currently practicing medical dosimetrists, directors of medical dosimetry education and training programs, industry

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AAMD Membership Survey

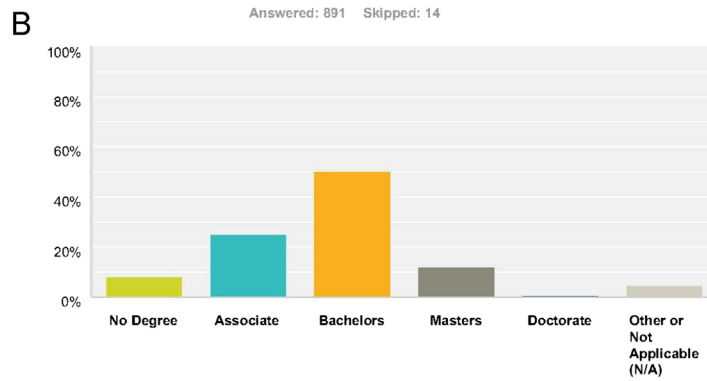
Q20 Indicate your academic degree(s). 2011



Answer Choices	Responses	
No Degree	11.48%	105
Associate	35.41%	324
Bachelors	51.37%	470
Masters	13.33%	122
Doctorate	1.31%	12
Other (please specify)	10.38%	95
Total Respondents: 915		

AAMD Salary Survey 2013

Q7 Indicate your academic degree(s). 2014



Answer Choices	Responses	
No Degree	8.19%	73
Associate	25.03%	223
Bachelors	49.83%	444
Masters	11.78%	105
Doctorate	0.56%	5
Other or Not Applicable (N/A)	4.60%	41
Total		891

Fig. 1. (A) Academic degree for medical dosimetrists in 2011. (B) Academic degree for medical dosimetrists in 2014.

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