

# Department of Research Abstracts

**GRADUATING MED-PEDS RESIDENTS ARE LESS SATISFIED WITH MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING FOR CHILDREN THAN FOR ADOLESCENTS OR ADULTS** Gretchen Caspary, Brian D. Kan, David C. Kaelber, Thomas Melgar, John K. Chamberlain.. Research, AAP, Elk Grove, IL; Int Med & Peds, Cedars Sinai Med Ctr, Los Angeles, CA; Int Med & Peds, Partners Healthcare, Harvard Univ, Boston, MA; Int Med & Peds, MSU Kalamazoo Ctr for Med Studies, Kalamazoo, MI; Int Med & Peds, Univ of Rochester, Rochester, NY. **Presented at the 2008 Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting.**

**Background:** Combined internal medicine and pediatrics (Med-Peds) residents receive mental health training in a variety of primary care and subspecialty settings. Upon completion of their training, many Med-Peds physicians provide mental health services to 3 populations: children, adolescents, and adults.

**Objective:** Identify the mental health training of graduating Med-Peds residents and their perceived skills in delivering mental health care to children, adolescent and adults.

**Design/Methods:** Data came from the 2007 AAP Graduating Med-Peds Survey sent to all 339 graduating Med-Peds residents nationally, with 183 valid responses (54% response rate). Graduating residents were asked 5-point Likert-scale questions (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent) about their adequacy of residency training and skills in performing 13 common mental health tasks for children, adolescents, and adults.

Training and skills questions were aggregated to create mean scores between 1 and 5 for children, adolescents and adults. Repeated measures 1-way ANOVAs were performed to compare the mean scores across the 3 patient categories.

**Results:** Residents report both the adequacy of their training (3.28) and their skills in performing (3.33) to be higher for adult mental health issues compared to both adolescents (training=3.12, skills=3.08) and children (training=2.73, skills=2.71). The mean scores were significantly different across the three patient categories for both training ( $p<.001$ ) and skills ( $p<.001$ ). However, for both training and skills, the difference between adolescents and children was substantially larger than that between adults and adolescents. Residents rated their training and skills as only fair or poor (mean score  $< 2.5$  on a scale of 1 to 5) for the following children's mental health care tasks: prescribing antipsychotic medications (training=2.06, skills=2.11), prescribing anxiolytic medications (training=2.29, skills=2.31), treating substance abuse (training=2.35, skills=2.39), and prescribing antidepressant medications (training=2.46, skills=2.40).

**Conclusions:** Med-peds residents generally rate their training and skills in mental health issues for adolescents and adults as good. However, they are significantly less satisfied with their training in and less confident in their skills in children's mental health care, particularly regarding prescribing appropriate medications.

