

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING ACCORDING TO PEDIATRICIANS

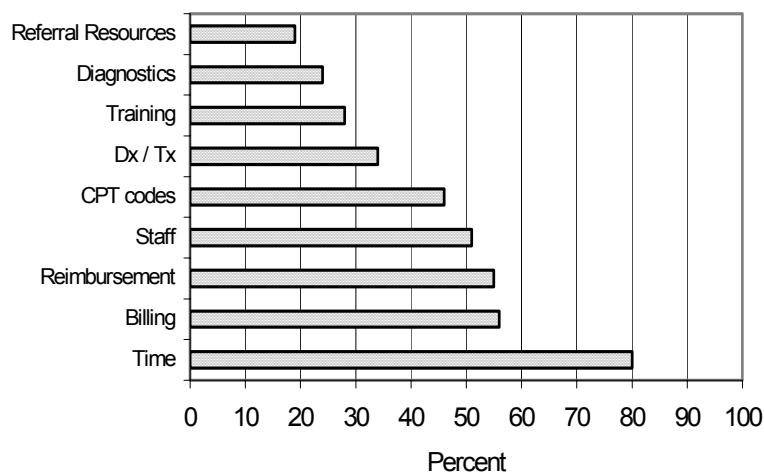
Results from AAP Surveys of Pediatricians

The following document summarizes several surveys that were sponsored fully or in part by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Although many other studies document barriers to developmental assessment (DA), the following surveys include the most common barriers to DA noted throughout the literature and are therefore the focus of this document.

A recent survey was conducted by AAP on a random sample of members across the nation as a means of assessing pediatricians' perceptions of and barriers to conducting developmental assessment (DA).¹ The respondents consisted of 794 members who provided health supervisions to children 0 to 35 months-of-age.

- 94% of the surveyed pediatricians thought that it was important to inquire about development
- 80% felt confident in their own ability to advise parents on developmental issues
- 65% reported inadequate training in DA
- 64% reported insufficient time to conduct DAs
- Nine specific barriers to DA were reported by the pediatricians (Figure 1).
- Physicians with more than 50% of their patients on public insurance were significantly more likely to cite lack of confidence, time, training, and staff as barriers to conducting DAs.
- Physicians with a non-white patient population of 40% or more had significantly less confidence in their own ability to do DA and reported less time for DA.

Figure 1. Barriers for Conducting Developmental Assessments (APA, 2000)



In 1978 the Task Force on Pediatric Education (AAP)

released recommendations that pediatric training programs should place a greater emphasis on child development. A survey of 147 pediatricians was conducted at 23 sites with Healthy Steps for Young Children Programs as a follow-up to the release of these recommendations.² The surveyed pediatricians were stratified or grouped by experience: in training, in practice, or more experienced.

- Although pediatricians reported being generally satisfied with the amount of time to discuss growth, development, and parenting issues, more than one-third noted staff shortages and managed care restrictions as reasons for lack of time for follow-up.
- More experienced pediatricians spent less time on well baby visits in the first 2 months of life.
- Pediatricians with greater experience were more satisfied with their staff's abilities to meet new parents' needs regarding issues related to development and overall health.
- Pediatricians in recent practice were more likely to report reimbursement concerns and limited staff as primary reasons why time was not available to address issues of development.
- Pediatricians reported discussing safety issues in lieu of addressing developmental and mental health concerns.



The Task Force on the Future of Pediatric Education has funded two collaborative survey initiatives (FOPE I, FOPE II) “...to look at the health care needs of children in the future and the workforce necessary to meet those needs.”³ The Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics subspecialty survey (FOPE II) documented the visit characteristics of developmental and behavioral pediatricians.

- An average of 6 new and 16 follow-up patients were seen a week for developmental or behavioral issues.
- Waiting time for new evaluations averaged 29 days.
- General pediatricians in the developmental and behavioral pediatrics subspecialty spent an average of 70 minutes to conduct initial evaluations and 28 minutes for each follow-up visit.
- 90% reported inadequate reimbursement and excessive paperwork as primary barriers to accepting additional patients.
- Approximately 40% reported plans to modify their developmental and/or behavioral pediatric practice in the near future (for example to include more teaching, provide subspecialty care, or work as a paid consultant).

¹ Halfon N, Hochstein M, Sareen H, O'Connor KG, Inkelas M, Olson LM. Pediatric Academic Societies periodic survey of fellow: barriers to the provision of developmental assessments during pediatric health supervision [abstract]. 2001 May. Available from URL:

<http://www.aap.org/research/ps46pas4.htm>.

AP, Periodic Survey of Fellows, 2000

² Minkovitz, Bijoy, & Strobino, 1998 (Conference Presentation)

³ The Future of Pediatric Education II, Summary of Survey Findings, 2000; The Future of Pediatric Education II, Organizing Pediatric Education to Meet the Needs of Infants, Adolescents, and Young Adults in the 21st Century, 2000

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