

**KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES UTILIZED AND PREFERRED
BY NURSE PRACTITIONERS**

**AN ABSTRACT OF
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The purpose of this study was to determine the information sources certified nurse practitioners (NPs) in Connecticut use and prefer to use in order to obtain new clinical knowledge necessary in daily patient care as well as to keep abreast of current knowledge. The study analyzed sources used and preferred by certified NPs in the areas of medications, diagnostic approaches, treatment techniques, and research findings when faced with problems in daily practice as well as when attempting to keep abreast of current clinical information.

A questionnaire was sent to 237 members of the Connecticut Nurse Practitioner Group, Incorporated (CNPGI). A 56% response rate was obtained. The questionnaire included a demographic section and four sections related to sources used and sources preferred in the areas of daily clinical practice and keeping abreast of current clinical knowledge. Descriptive data analysis was used to answer the research questions. Percentages of source selections were calculated according to overall results, area of NP specialty, practice setting, and highest degree earned.

The sample was limited to certified NP members of CNPGI who worked in Connecticut and provided at least 16 hours of direct patient care per week. Most respondents were masters-prepared, received their NP education in a masters or certificate program, worked in a hospital/ambulatory care setting or private physician's office; they represented a variety of specialties.

Data analysis indicated that NPs used texts, MD colleagues, and journals when confronted with problems in daily practice; they indicated a preference for these same resources as well as for CE programs. In order to keep abreast of current clinical knowledge, NPs indicated the use and preference for CE programs and medical and nursing journals. Some minor differences were noted when data were analyzed according to level of education. No important differences were found when the data were analyzed according to practice setting and specialty.

The ultimate goal of this research was to help identify processes NPs use to obtain new knowledge. Such understanding will enable researchers, continuing education (CE) providers, educators, employers, and NPs to utilize and/or provide the most effective communication channels and knowledge resources for the dissemination of clinical knowledge necessary for maintaining clinical competence. Studies that address the entire process of the integration of new knowledge in clinical practice are recommended. Further studies of NP resource use to assess differences based on user characteristics are recommended.