

One-third of physician assistants work in primary care

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Roughly one-third of physician assistants choose to work in primary care, according to a study published in the January/February issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

(HealthDay)—Roughly one-third of physician assistants (PAs) choose to work in primary care, according to a study published in the January/February issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Bettie Coplan, P.A., from Midwestern University in Glendale, Ariz., and colleagues analyzed data from the 2009 American Academy of Physician Assistants' Annual Census Survey. Respondents included in the final sample had graduated from PA school between 1965 and 2008 (18,048 of 19,608 participants among 72,433 surveyed).

The researchers found that one-third of PAs reported working in

[primary care](#). Those who were female, Hispanic, and older were more likely to work in primary care. There was a significant decline in the percentage of PAs working in primary care (average 0.3 percent decrease per year), although among the cohort of 2004 to 2008 graduates, the percentage of primary care PAs increased slightly by an average of 0.9 percent per year ($P = 0.02$). The low response rate (27 percent) to the census limited the ability to generalize these findings to the total population of PAs.

"[Demographics](#) associated with an increased likelihood of primary care practice among PAs appear to be similar to those of [medical students](#) who choose primary care," the authors write.

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