

The Productivity of Hospitalists in the U.S. Healthcare System: 2009

Conducted by:
Martin Akel & Associates

Study Methodology

This survey was conducted by Martin Akel & Associates of Chester, N.J., which has more than 30 years of experience conducting surveys for major corporations.

- In January 2009, nearly 5,000 hospitalists received an e-mail invitation to take an online survey.
- Approximately 10% (477) of hospitalists completed the survey.
- The study produced a maximum sampling tolerance/margin of error of +/-4.6% at the 95% confidence level.

Hospitalist Demographics

Number of hospitalists in group

- Average: 12.9

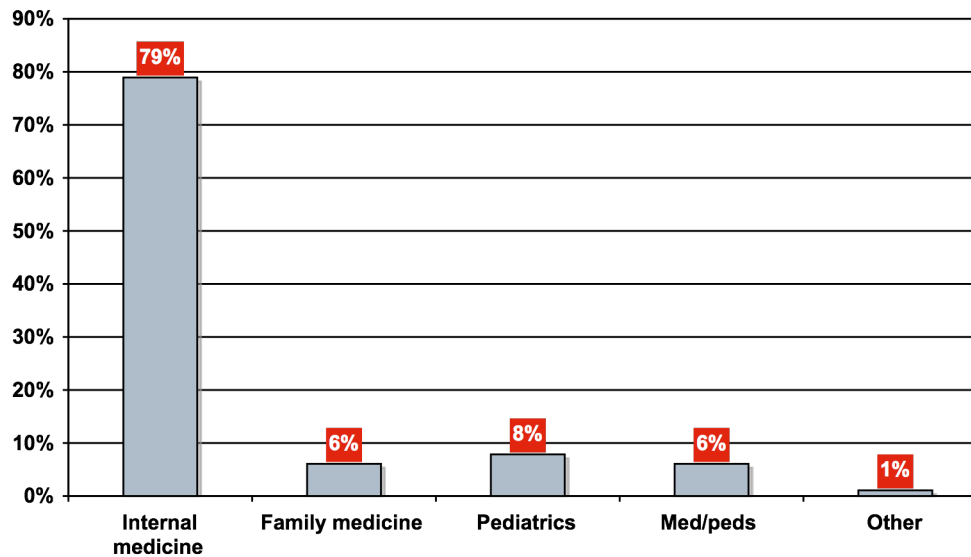
Number of beds in hospital

- Average: 317

Percent of time spent on patient care (as opposed to teaching, research, etc.)

- Average: 87%

Specialty training:



Hospitalist Demographics

All hospitalists deliver patient care in hospital medical units/wards (99%).

- However, they also deliver care in ICUs (83%) and emergency departments (71%).

How many patients do you see in a typical shift?

• New patients	8
• Existing patients	14

Number of different diseases/conditions hospitalists treat per patient

- On average, hospitalists treat 4.3 diseases/conditions per patient.

Trend in the number of patients hospitalists treat

- Over the last 3-4 years, hospitalists have seen a net increase of 22% more patients.
- Hospitalists identified the following driving forces behind the growing number of patients in hospitals:
 - the aging population (77%);
 - the need to treat more uninsured/underinsured citizens (65%); and,
 - the growing number of people without primary care physicians (58%).

Hospitalist Demographics

Trend in the number of U.S. hospitalists

- Over the next 3-4 years, virtually all respondents (99%) foresee an increase in the number of hospitalists working in the United States. Almost half (46%) say there will be a “significant increase.”

Predictions of hospital medicine’s growth in the coming 3-4 years

• Significant increase	46.3%
• Increase	52.4%
Subtotal, Significant Increase + Increase	98.7%
• No change	1.1%
• Decrease	0.2%
• Significant decrease	0.0%

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

Overall number of prescriptions written

- The average hospitalist's shift is 12 hours. During that time, hospitalists write an average of 3.7 scripts per hour, or approximately one every 15 minutes.

Number of prescriptions you write per shift:

• Prescription drugs	30.3
• OTC	14.1
TOTAL	44

Treatment of primary care vs. acute diseases/conditions

- Virtually all hospitalists deliver both primary care (96%) and acute care (100%).
- Of all the diseases/conditions they treat, a quarter (26%) are primary care conditions, and three-quarters (75%) are acute conditions.

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

Number of prescriptions written per week in common inpatient therapeutic categories:

	% prescribing	Average # Rx/week
Anticoagulants/Antiplatelets	93	
Coumarines (Coumadin)	91.5	5.4
Heparin and derivative substances	90.5	8.6
Direct thrombin inhibitors	34.6	1.8
Antimicrobials/Antibiotics	99.7	15.1
Asthma/COPD	99.2	
Anti-leukotriene agents	78.4	4.0
Bronchodilators	98.9	12.9
Corticosteroids	98.7	10.4

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

	% prescribing	Average # Rx/week
Cardiovascular Therapies	95.6	
Alpha blockers	66.9	3.0
Angiotensin II receptor blockers	91.2	7.6
ACE inhibitors	92.9	11.3
Beta agonists	76.1	7.1
Beta-blockers	93.4	12.4
Calcium channel blockers	91.5	8.9
Central adrenergic inhibitors/acting agents	70.2	3.6
COX II inhibitors	41.3	1.7
Diuretics	94.8	11.7
Lipid-lowering agents	92.8	12.4
Nitrates	91.1	7.9
Potassium channel blockers	59.4	2.9
Thrombolytic agents	37.6	1.8
Vasodilators	81.3	4.7

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

	% prescribing	Average # Rx/week
Diabetes Drugs	95.6	
Oral diabetic agents	90.7	10.4
Insulin products	95.0	13.2
GI Drugs	99.2	
Anticholinergics	58.0	2.5
H2 receptor antagonists	92.7	6.4
Proton pump inhibitors	98.9	13.7
Neurologic Agents	93.3	
Amphetamines	10.1	0.4
Antiepileptics/anti-seizure drugs	91.8	4.3
Central nervous system drugs	81.1	4.7

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

	% prescribing	Average # Rx/week
Pain Management	99.2	
Acetaminophen	96.8	15.3
NSAIDs	93.5	8.4
Opioids	97.1	11.3
Psychiatric Agents	92.2	
N-methyl-D-aspartate Blockers	20.2	1.0
Amyloid deposit inhibitors	20.7	1.0
Antidepressants	87.8	7.1
Antipsychotics	78.3	4.5
Anti-anxiety drugs	89.4	7.6
Lithium	25.4	0.9
Stroke Therapies		
t-PA	14.2	0.5

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

Frequency of changing drugs previously taken by patients

- In addition to prescribing products that patients have never taken before, hospitalists frequently switch the products patients are already taking.
- On average, they change the prescriptions that a third (37%) of their patients were taking on admission.

Number of brands on hospital's formulary

- Most hospitalists (92%) believe there is “always or usually” a sufficient number of branded drugs to choose from on their institution's formularies. Therefore, the existence of formularies does not limit their ability to prescribe brand drugs that are appropriate.

How often do you have a sufficient number of brands to choose from on your hospital's formulary?

• Always	12.4%
• Almost always	48.7%
• Usually	30.5%
Subtotal, Always + Almost Always + Usually	91.6%
• Sometimes	7.6%
Subtotal, Always + Almost Always + Usually + Sometimes	99.2%
• Rarely/never	0.8%

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

When hospitalists prescribe, they actively educate patients to gain compliance with drug therapy

- Hospitalists use an average of 4.5 different methods to enhance patient compliance with their drug therapies.

Methods used by hospitalists to ensure drug compliance after discharge

• Educate patients on the medical condition	96.0%
• Clearly explain instructions and their importance	88.4%
• Ask patients if instructions are understood	76.1%
• Write down instructions for patients	75.4%
• Use or provide patient education material	73.4%
• Follow up with patients	36.2%
Subtotal, actively engaged in gaining compliance	99.7%
• None of the above	0.3%

Prescribing Patterns of Hospitalists

Frequency of meetings with pharmaceutical sales reps

- Hospitalists are difficult to reach via calls by pharmaceutical reps. Only one third (32%) meet with reps.
- On average, hospitalists meet with reps less than once a week (0.6 times per week).

How many times each week do you meet with pharmaceutical sales reps?

0	68.3%
1	20.3%
2	7.4%
3	1.8%
4	0.5%
5 or more	1.8%

Hospitalists as Opinion Leaders

Hospitalists' status as opinion leaders

- Hospitalists are opinion leaders in their facilities, with 83% frequently being sought out by others for advice on patient care issues, and more than half (54%) frequently sought out for input on the proper drugs to prescribe

How often are you sought out by others in your facility for advice on each of these issues?

	Patient care issues	Drug products to prescribe
• Very frequently	42.5%	21.3%
• Frequently	40.2%	32.6%
Subtotal, Very Frequently + Frequently	82.7%	53.9%
• Sometimes	15.9%	38.0%
Subtotal, Opinion Leaders	98.6%	91.9%
• Rarely/never	1.4%	8.1%

Hospitalists as Opinion Leaders

Trends in the importance of hospitalists in delivering patient care

- Virtually all respondents (98%) indicate that, compared to 3-4 years ago, hospitalists have become more important in delivering patient care in institutional settings.
- Most (96%) believe this will continue to be a very strong trend over the next 3-4 years.
- Nearly eight of ten hospitalists (80%) are experiencing a “strong trend” in other, non-hospitalist physicians requesting them to help manage the medical conditions of their patients.
- Most (86%) are heavily involved in teams that decide upon clinical care. And most are opinion leaders regarding both patient care and drug therapy.

What trend are you experiencing in other, non-hospitalist physicians requesting you manage the medical conditions of their patients (e.g., surgeons requesting that you provide care for their patients' non-surgical conditions, etc.)?

• Very strong trend	44.4%
• Strong trend	35.5%
Subtotal, Very Strong + Strong Trend	79.9%
• Moderate trend	16.2%
Subtotal, Very Strong + Strong + Moderate Trend	96.1%
• No real trend	3.9%

Hospitalists as Opinion Leaders

Leading reasons hospitalists give to explain why their role in the hospital is growing

- Hospitalists have a strong understanding of conditions/diseases **common to hospital care** (86%)
- They can **see the same patients multiple times**, which produces more effective outcomes (73%)
- They can deliver more effective, **evidence-based** care (66%)
- Their knowledge of hospital-related conditions/diseases **improves the quality of care** (83%)
- Based on their strengths, they can often **reduce the length** of hospital stays (84%)

Which roles do you play on teams/groups/committees that determine clinical/patient care policies and approaches for your facility?

• Team/group leader	46.8%
• Supervise group's efforts	30.0%
Subtotal, Have Team Management Responsibilities	49.5%
• Team/group member	65.9%
• Special project responsibility	37.8%
Subtotal, Involved With Teams	86.2%
• Not involved with teams/groups	13.8%

Hospitalists and QI Initiatives

Trends in hospitalists' roles

- Because hospitalists are linked directly to reducing lengths of stay and to reducing the cost of care, hospitalists now play a much greater role in delivering patient care in hospitals.
- There are now a significant number of hospitalists working at most institutions (average of 13 per hospital). The large majority of hospitalists have also taken over leadership roles to improve patient care.

Do you feel that based on your specific experience and skills as a hospitalist, the following occurs?

	Yes
• The length of inpatient stays is often reduced	94.0%
• The cost of care at your facility is reduced	88.4%

Hospitalists and QI Initiatives

Over the past 2 to 3 years, what trend are you experiencing in taking a leadership role in your facility to help improve the quality of care?

• Role is increasing significantly	33.6%
• Role is increasing	47.8%
Subtotal, Increase + Significant Increase	81.4%
• No change	13.8%
• Role is decreasing	1.2%
• Role is decreasing significantly	0.2%
Subtotal, Decrease + Significant Decrease	1.4%
Subtotal, Involved In A Leadership Role	96.6%
• Not involved in a leadership role	3.4%

Hospitalists and QI Initiatives

Projects hospitalists have been involved in to improve patient care (verbatim answers from study):

- A group of hospital leaders helped developed a medication reconciliation program to address JCAHO recommendations.
- Accuracy in discharge medicine reconciliation.
- Admission order set for different DRGs.
- Antibiotic stewardship.
- Antibiotic use in febrile neurological patients. As chairman of the quality medical committee reviewing multiple protocol and seeing these through implementation.
- As medical director, meet with utilization director (MD) and administrator, social workers on a weekly basis for team and daily with social workers to move patients out of hospital to appropriate facility or home with appropriate care at all times. I am also involved with medication reconciliation process making it more efficient and accurate.
- Assembling instructional handouts for various medical conditions that if followed will reduce likelihood of readmissions. I designed the handouts.
- Asthma protocol initiative, my role is/was to inform all levels of care providers of the initiative and to work to see the implementation continue over time.
- Authored a community-acquired pneumonia standard admission orders.

Questions?

For more results from “The Productivity of Hospitalists In The U.S. Healthcare System: 2009” contact:

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