

Workload Formulae for Clinical Supervisors

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Abstract:

This session provided attendees with information regarding factors that may be considered when developing a workload formula for clinical educators. In addition, issues related to equating clinical load with course load, off-campus supervision, service provision by clinical educators, income generation, and load considerations for full vs. part-time educators were discussed. The presenters shared the workload formulae for clinical supervision utilized at their Universities as well as formulae from other programs of differing size and focus.

Summary:

The topic of workload formulae is of great interest to all clinical personnel for many reasons. It is helpful to have data for “calibration” across universities and it is beneficial to learn about different formulae for possible change in the future. Limited information has been published in the literature on this topic; most information is unpublished or gathered informally. A time/activity analysis by Andrews et al. (2000) suggested the following:

1. Average time spent weekly in supervision for a diagnostic session was 2.85 hours.
2. Average time spent weekly in supervision related to one client in treatment was 1.33 hours.
3. Average time spent weekly in assigned non-clinical duties was 9.6 hours (24% of available work time).

Many clinic personnel are familiar with the Ohio Formula developed many years ago and described by Uhl, Weinrich, and Hutchinson (date unknown). The formula continues to be used today by many university programs. The formula is based on a 36-hour clinical assignment week with reductions for course teaching and diagnostic evaluations. The formula is:

$$\frac{1}{2} X + \frac{1}{2} Y + \frac{1}{2} Z = 36 \text{ hours}$$

X = the number of client's supervised

Y = the number of one-hour therapy sessions per week

Z = the number of students supervised.

Several workload policy models were presented. The model used at Georgia State University includes guidelines for supervision during the academic semester (15 weeks) and the summer semester (6 weeks). In this model, a full-time supervisor is expected to supervise 20-24 clinical units. A clinical unit = one student except in the case of diagnostics where supervisor of a diagnostic team counts as four clinical units. The supervisor's load is reduced by 6-8 units if she is teaching an academic course. The model used at Nova Southeastern University is a variation of the Ohio Formula using 37.5 hours per week as the workload and an additional component that deduces "off the top" time for committee work, diagnostic supervision, teaching, presentations, etc.

Formulae were also presented for several other universities including Buffalo State University, Plattsburg State University, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Purdue University, Indiana University, William Patterson University and the University of New Hampshire.

The presenters discussed several observations related to the workload formulae. Clearly, some workload formulae are very complex and it is clear that the unique aspects of each program need to be considered when developing or revising a workload policy. There were similarities among the formulae; most universities counted a diagnostic experience as 4-5 units and most universities tended to provide approximately 50% supervision to students.

A proposed process was discussed that could be utilized to develop a workload formula.

1. Determine percent of supervision that is standard for your university.
2. Complete a workload study for at least one semester.
3. Determine number of hours in the "supervision" work week.
4. Subtract off the work week or include in the formula time for other required responsibilities.

Issues that create challenges in determining supervision loads were discussed at the end of the session. These challenges included: how to count travel time for off-campus supervision, reimbursement providers that required 100% supervision, supervision requirements in conflict with other program activities happening simultaneously; need to count other supervision activities such as assisting students with documentation, reading reports, planning unique experiences since they may consume extra time; and the need for time to develop novel programs or experiences for clinicians.