Using NAMCS and NHAMCS to Examine Health Care by U.S. Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners

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NAMCS and NHAMCS are the leading sources of nationally representative data on practice characteristics and provision of ambulatory services by office-based physicians (NAMCS) and in hospital-based outpatient clinics and emergency departments (NHAMCS).[2] It is important to clarify that, in NAMCS, patient visits were selected from a stratified sample of office-based *physicians* during a reporting week, as opposed to visits selected from *physician practices* as noted by Mafi and colleagues.[1] This means that visits, including those seen by PAs/NPs, were selected from the sampled physician's patient log and subject to physician supervision. Office-based care by PAs/NPs, therefore, would be undercounted in NAMCS to the extent that PAs/NPs see their own patients independent of the physicians within the practice. Ongoing efforts are underway to expand NAMCS to capture PA/NP care more comprehensively in ambulatory settings.[3] Research examining PA/NP care can also take advantage of NAMCS community health center data that select visits to physicians, PAs, NPs, and nurse midwives.[2]

References

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