

RESEARCH SUMMARY:

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatricians Activities Focused on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Sleep Problems, and Other Behavior Problems

It is important to understand the practices and interests of developmental-behavioral pediatricians (DBPs) who work at hospitals associated with medical schools. These doctors train a large number of future pediatricians about caring for children with developmental or behavioral challenges, they train the future DBPs, and they are the DBPs most likely to conduct research to improve the care children and families receive in DBP practices.

We surveyed 50 DBPs who work at 12 hospitals associated with medical schools about their interests and how they spend their time. They spend approximately half their time providing clinical care, approximately 17 percent of their time doing research, and approximately 15 percent of their time providing teaching or clinical supervision of pediatricians or DBPs in training. The remainder of their time is spent in administration, advocacy, or other activities. They report the greatest interest and expertise in caring for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, sleep problems, and other behavior problems. Compared to older DBPs, younger DBPs reported greater interest and expertise related to ASD and less interest and expertise related to parenting and chronic illness.

The relatively small amount of time that DBPs spend in research and the changing interests and areas of expertise of DBPs may represent challenges for the field. More individuals conducting research for more of their time may be needed to improve care provided in DBP practice. The changing interests and expertise of DBPs working at hospitals associated with medical schools may change the training experiences of pediatricians and DBPs in training.

Reference:

Roizen N, Stein REK, Silver EJ, High P, Augustyn MC, Blum NJ, Academic Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric Faculty at DBPNet Sites: Changing Composition and Interests. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*. 2017 Nov-Dec;38(9):683-689. PMID: 28914731