AANP vs. ANCC: A Comparison of the Examinations

Notes to Accompany
The Program

BY
Margaret Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC
President, Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc.
North Andover, MA
Family Nurse Practitioner, Adjunct Faculty, Family Practice Residency
Greater Lawrence (MA) Family Health Center
Editorial Board Member
The Nurse Practitioner Journal, Prescriber’s Letter, American Nurse Today

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85 Flagship Drive, North Andover, MA 01845-6154
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85 Flagship Drive
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978.794.8366 Fax 978.794.2455
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Developed and presented by:
Margaret A. Fitzgerald,
DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC
President
Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc.
Family Nurse Practitioner
Greater Lawrence (MA) Family Health Center
Editorial Board, The Nurse Practitioner Journal,
Medscape Nursing, The Prescriber’s Letter,
American Nurse Today

In the First 15 Years of the NP Role’s Establishment

• The scope of practice expanded, matched with the increasing complexity of healthcare

APRN Regulation: LACE Essentials

• Licensure
  – Granting of authority to practice
• Accreditation
  – Formal review and approval by a recognized agency of educational degree or certification programs in nursing or nursing-related programs

In the First 15 Years of the NP Role’s Establishment (continued)

• Need to define and credential the profession
• Part of this credentialing included the establishment of the NP certification examination.

APRN Regulation: LACE Essentials (continued)

• Certification
  – Formal recognition of knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by the achievement of standards identified by the profession
• Education
  – Formal preparation of APRNs in graduate degree-granting or post-graduate certificate programs
NP Certification

- Certification part of APRN licensure in nearly all of the US states
- Exceptions
  - Kansas
  - New York
  - California

APRN Consensus Model


How do the certifying organizations describe certification and the NP certification examination?

- “Certification is the process by which a nongovernmental agency or an association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications.”

- “Certification can be used for entry into practice, validation of competence, recognition of excellence, and/or for regulation. It can be mandatory or voluntary.”

- “Certification validates an individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities in a defined role and clinical area of practice, based on pre-determined standards.”
  - Source: www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx

- “The Nurse Practitioner (NP) certification examination tests the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for entry into advanced practice.”
  - Source: www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx
Agencies Offering NP Certification

• American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
  • AKA AANP
    – www.aanpcertification.org
    • ANP, FNP, GNP certification
    • As of early 2013, adult-gerontology NP certification

• American Nurses Credentialing Center
  • AKA ANCC
    – www.nursecredentialing.org
    • ANP, FNP, GNP, ACNP, PMHNP, PNP certification
    • As of 2013, adult-gero primary care NP certification (AGPCNP) (early 2013) and new form FNP exam (late 2013)

Test Availability

• Computer-based
  – Year-round or nearly so
  • Multiple test sites across the country

Length of Test

• Number of questions
  – 150-200 questions
    • ANCC ANP, FNP, GNP=175 items
    • ANCC exams launching in 2013 (AGPCNP, FNP late 2013)=200 items
    • All AANP= 150 items
  – 15-25+ items as sample test items, neither contribute to nor detract from exam score, as part of question total

Time Allotted for Exam

• ANCC
  – 3.5 h for ANP, GNP, FNP exams
  – 4 h for AGPCNP, FNP (late 2013)
• AANP
  – 3 h

• For all
  – Additional 15+ mins allowed to become oriented to testing software

Availability of Results

• For computer-based exams
  – Results provided, pass or fail, at end of the examination
Comparison of Exams

- Recognition for NP licensure
  - All aforementioned exams

Comparison of Exams

- Credential
  - AANP example
    - NP-C for all certifications
  - ANCC example
    - FNP-BC (family)
    - ANP-BC (adult)
    - GNP-BC (gerontology)
    - AGPCNP-BC (adult-gero primary care NP)

Comparison of the Exams

- Exam content reflective of the age range for the given NP role
  - FNP = Lifespan
  - Adult, adult-gero => 13 years
  - Gerontology => 55-65 years

Comparison of the Exams

- Exam content reflective of the typical practice setting for the given NP role
  - FNP, ANP - Largely outpatient primary care, some urgent care
  - Adult-gero, gerontologic - Likely the above-mentioned locations plus long term care facility

Assumed with all Examinations

- NP role:
  - One of the 4 APRN roles.
    - Others = CNS, CNM, CRNA
  - Builds up the competencies of RN role.
  - Practice (therefore testing) reflects the depth, breadth of knowledge need for safe practice.

What is common to all NP examinations?

- Anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology
  - Mechanism of disease, how drug therapies modify disease
What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Health promotion and disease prevention
  - Principles of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Obtaining the health history
  - Interview techniques, analyzing content of subjective information

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Evaluation of signs and symptoms
  - Symptom analysis, developing working diagnosis

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Physical examination
  - Knowledge of normal, abnormal finding, synthesizing findings with health history to hone diagnosis

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Laboratory, diagnostic testing
  - Ordering or performing tests to help support diagnosis and/or contribute to the treatment plan

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

- Evidence-based practice (EBP)
  - Developing a plan of care based on supporting scientific evidence and clinical guidelines
  - Assume the resources are available for providing cost-effective EBP.
What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

• Legal and ethical issues
  – Malpractice, confidentiality, patient advocacy and competency

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

• Community resources
  – Recognizing and utilizing community resources to aid in care of patient and family

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

• Cultural competence
  – Incorporating commonly encountered cultural beliefs and practices

• Principles of epidemiology
  – Considering sensitivity, specificity of diagnostics, prevalence, incidence, others

What is common to all NP examinations? (cont.)

• Healthcare economics
  – Providing cost-effective care, Medicare, Medicaid, private insurances, national healthcare financing issues

• Healthcare management
  – APRN as a healthcare leader

What are the differences in the NP certification examinations?

• ANCC exams
  – When compared to other agencies, generally higher percent focused on professional issues, healthcare policy, etc.
  – Example- ~25% of adult, gero, adult-gerontology, family primary care exams

Please Note

• Additional content on this domain is covered in the “Select Ethical, Legal, Professional and Cultural Practice Issues” section of your on-line course materials.
Exams Retiring at End of 2014

- Adult Nurse Practitioner
  - ANCC and AANP
- Gerontological NP
  - ANCC and AANP

What happens if you hold one of these certifications?

- Keep certification current!
  - If your certification lapses, you may not be able to renew your existing certification or your license to practice.
- Your credential is NOT retiring!

Examinations Offered Starting early 2013

- ANCC
  - Adult-gerontology primary care NP (AGPCNP),
- AANP
  - Adult-gerontology NP

As of late 2013, ANCC FNP Board Examination

- New form of ANCC FNP exam will be offered.

ANCC ANP, GNP Domains through early 2014
ANCC FNP Domains until late 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Approx. number of items</th>
<th>Approx. % of total exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Policy and Delivery</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANCC ANP, GNP Domains through end 2014
ANCC FNP Domains until early late 2013 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>% of total exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Assessment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Management</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FNP (starting late 2013, AGPCNP (starting early 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Approximate number of items</th>
<th>Approx. percentage of examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations for Advanced Practice</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Practice</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AANP ANP, FNP, AGNP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>Percent of total exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>~35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>~25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>~22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>~18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typical Percentage of Examinees Who Pass the Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANCC</th>
<th>AANP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typically, 83-88% depending on area of certification Translates to a score of 350 (minimum passing score) = ~12th%tile to 17th%tile</td>
<td>Typically, 87% overall pass rate for all exams Translates to score of 500 (minimum passing score) = ~13th%tile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure if Failure: Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANCC</th>
<th>AANP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply to retest after 60 days</td>
<td>Apply to retest, 15 h CE prior to retesting, no more than two times in a calendar year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recertification Every 5 Years: Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANCC</th>
<th>AANP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice hours plus CE hours and select professional activities</td>
<td>Practice hours plus CE hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

True or false?

• On the national NP certification exam, you should expect to find specific questions on your state’s APRN practice act.
True or false?

- You plan to sit for the certification exam in a state where NPs have limited or no controlled substance prescribing authority. As a result, your certification exam will not contain questions about prescribing opioids.

True or false?

- Once an NP has achieved nationally recognized certification from a state and nationally recognized certification agency, this person can now practice as a nurse practitioner.

What do you need, at minimum, in most states to practice as a NP?

- RN license
- National NP certification
- NP license
- State-level Rx authority
- Federal DEA authority
- Credentialing with agency, insurance companies

With All Certification Examinations, Think:

Entry-level NP practice
Nationally and internationally recognized standards of care and clinical guidelines, evidence-based practice (EBP)

Evidence-based practice (EBP) defined- The delivery of individualized healthcare on the basis of an awareness of the impact and strength of related scientific evidence*

The clinical information presented in the Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. review course is based on current EBP.

The broad stroke of practice
Not the mix you see in a typical clinical day
As much thyroid as DM
As much male GU as female GYN
Consider that the resources needed for cost-effective EBP are available.

Common diseases occur commonly.
Not an examination of the esoteric
Most nursing practice at the RN level is one of exceptions rather than rules.

Information on exam...

- At least 6 months old!
- “Hot off the press” issues not likely included

Additional Resources

- Frequently asked questions, study recommendations and sample exam questions to aid in preparing for certification including archives of Margaret Fitzgerald’s certification issues articles
  - Available free of charge at www.fhea.com/certificationcols/certfaqfhea.shtml

Additional Resources (continued)

- Archived FHEA electronic newsletters
  - Timely information on pharmacology
  - Clinical issues of interest to advanced practice nurses
  - Available free of charge at www.fhea.com/ezine_archive.shtml

End of Presentation
Thank you for your time and attention.
Margaret A. Fitzgerald,
DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC
Website: www.fhea.com email: cs@fhea.com
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