TITLE: Physician Assistants: Clinical Evidence, Cost-Effectiveness, and Guidelines

DATE: 21 October 2010

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What is the clinical evidence regarding the use of physician assistants, as compared to other non-physician care givers, in health care settings?

2. What is the cost-effectiveness of the use of physician assistants in health care settings?

3. What are the evidence-based guidelines regarding the role of physician assistants in health care settings?

METHODS:

A limited literature search was conducted on key health technology assessment resources, including PubMed, the Cochrane Library (Issue 10, 2010), University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, ECRI (Health Devices Gold), EuroScan, international health technology agencies, and a focused Internet search. The search was limited to English language articles published between January, 1 2005 and October, 18 2010. Filters were applied to limit the retrieval to health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, economic studies and guidelines. Internet links were provided, where available.

RESULTS:

HTIS reports are organized so that the higher quality evidence is presented first. Therefore, health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses are presented first. These are followed by randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, economic evaluations, and evidence-based guidelines.

One randomized controlled trial and 14 non-randomized studies were identified regarding the clinical evidence regarding the use of physician assistants, as compared to other non-physician care givers, in health care settings. Two economic studies were identified regarding the cost-
effectiveness of the use of physician assistants in health care settings. No guidelines regarding
the role of physician assistants in health care settings were identified. No relevant health
technology assessments, systematic reviews, or meta-analyses were identified. Additional
articles of potential interest can be found in the appendix.

**Health technology assessments**
No literature identified

**Systematic reviews and meta-analyses**
No literature identified.

**Randomized controlled trials**

**Non-randomized studies**


Economic evaluations


Guidelines and recommendations

No literature identified.

PREPARED BY:
Health Technology Inquiry Service
Email: htis@cadth.ca
Tel: 1-866-898-8439

Physician Assistants
APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:

Physician resources


Review articles


Additional references - surveys


