

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

Negotiating Practices Among Nurse Practitioners: Is There a Gender Component and Does It Affect Salary?

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BACKGROUND: Gender wage gaps have been reported in the literature for decades. Data from research studies and census reports continue to confirm the fact that males experiences more advancement opportunities at every stage of career development. The nurse practitioner profession is dominated by females, yet studies demonstrate that male nurse practitioners out earn female nurse practitioners by approximately \$13,000. There is scant research on negotiation practices among nurse practitioners based on gender. Availability of such data could facilitate more informed salary negotiation preparation and practices of nurse practitioners. The purpose of this research is to describe whether negotiation differences based on gender is present among a sample of nurse practitioners in the United States.

METHODS: The focus of the current study was descriptive and exploratory in nature, therefore a mixed method design was employed. The quantitative strand included a cross-sectional survey design while the qualitative component also included a cross-sectional approach. The instrument used to gather the data consisted of twenty-five Likert-scale items and three open-ended questions. Based on an extensive literature review, the survey was developed by the authors to garner descriptive components related to salary, benefits, and negotiating practices of nurse practitioners. The qualitative strand focused specifically on the factors related to negotiating practices. Additional demographic data were collected including years of experience, earning history, race, age, gender and ethnicity. To ensure face validity, the items of the survey were reviewed for clarity and structure by a panel of APRNs and nursing faculty. Following approval of the university's institutional review board, the AANP Research Committee also completed review and approval so data could be collected at the 2018 American Association of Nurse Practitioners' National Conference. Participants had the option to complete a paper and pencil version of the survey or complete it using Survey Monkey.

RESULTS: Quantitative data revealed that fewer females (49%) than males (53%) negotiated their salary. Mean salary difference among females who negotiated their salary versus females who did not negotiate was \$1,381 higher. Males fared better than females in negotiation of base salary (86% vs 72%), schedule (85% vs 32%), paid time off (78% vs 43%), bonus (57% vs 28%), continuing education (93% vs 53%), malpractice insurance (78% vs 43%), and licensure (79% vs 49%). Males were also more confident than females during the negotiation process (36% vs 13%) and felt less anxious and more prepared than their female colleagues.

Qualitative data collected from this survey continued to demonstrate a lack of confidence and inexperience with negotiation among female nurse practitioners. When describing factors that prevented one from negotiating or factors that negatively affected the negotiation process; females used words such as inexperience, insecurity, fear, and lack of confidence. Male responses to these questions were related to set rates by a governing body or being a new graduate. In discussing factors that positively affected the negotiation process, both males and females stated having knowledge of current salaries in the field as well as having a mentor were beneficial.

CONCLUSION: Negotiation practices among female and male nurse practitioners continue to differ. Lack of success among female negotiators as compared to their male colleagues may stem from inexperience, insecurity, and lack of confidence. Future implications should focus on improving negotiating skills among female nurse practitioners by offering negotiation workshops/education to new graduates and active nurse practitioners.

Title:

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Keywords:

gender wage gap, negotiation and nurse practitioners

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Abstract Summary:

The nurse practitioner profession is dominated by females, yet studies demonstrate that male nurse practitioners out earn female nurse practitioners by approximately \$13,000. The question posed is why does this phenomenon exist. Do negotiation practices differ among genders and do these differences play a role in the gender wage gap?

Content Outline:

1. Background
 1. NP profession dominated by females
 2. Male NPs out earn female NPs by approximately \$13,000
 3. Males are better negotiators than females
1. Societal norms and expectations
2. Inexperience
2. Purpose
 1. Examination of negotiation practices among NPs
 2. Factors associated with negotiation practices
 3. Effects of gender on negotiation
3. Methods
 1. Design - mixed method cross-sectional
 2. Instrument - 28 item (reviewed by APRNs and nursing faculty)
 1. 25 Likert-scale items
 2. 3 open-ended
 3. Approval - University IRB and AANP Research Committee
 4. Data Collection - 2018 AANP National Nurse Practitioner Conference
 1. online Survey Monkey, or
 2. Paper and pencil
4. Results
 1. Quantitative
 1. A larger number of males negotiated their salary as opposed to females
 1. Did not affect salary among females
 2. Inverse relationship among males
 2. Fewer females were successful at negotiating base salary, schedule, paid time off, bonus, continuing education, malpractice insurance, and licensure as opposed to males
 3. More females felt anxious, unprepared, and less confident than males when negotiating
 2. Qualitative
 1. Factors preventing negotiation
 1. Females - didn't know it was an option, inexperience, not a negotiator
 2. Males - fixed salary by government, recent graduate
 2. Factors positively affecting negotiation
 1. Females - mentor, data on NP salary, preparation in graduate school on negotiation
 2. Males - aware of revenue generated, solid knowledge of rate of reimbursement, spoke with someone in field prior to negotiating

3. Factors negatively affecting negotiation
 1. Females - lack of confident, insecure, fear, lack of preparation
 2. Males - company had set policy, colleagues willing to "work for peanuts," new grad
5. Conclusion
 1. Salaries in this study were similar
 2. Males were more successful at negotiating
 3. Females demonstrated a lack of confidence in the negotiation process
4. Future implications
 1. Improving negotiating skills among females
 2. Implementing negotiation workshops/classes in NP schools and for NP professionals

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Author Summary: Dr. Lenahan is the NP Coordinator at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She is board certified as a Family and Emergency Nurse Practitioner. Dr. Lenahan practices in the Emergency Department at Lafayette General Medical Center. She has been studying gender wage gap among nursing professions with her colleague, Dr. Donna Gauthier, since 2016 and looks forward to contributions she can make towards equalizing the gap.

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Author Summary: Dr. Donna Gauthier is an associate professor of nursing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The impetus behind her interest in gender wage gap stemmed from reports of her state, Louisiana, having the worst gender wage gap in the nation. She, along with her colleague Dr. Christy Lenahan, have been examining gender wage gap among nursing professions since 2016.