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The Benefits of Specialist Asthma Education for Nurse Practitioners in the US

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Introduction: Improving outcomes for patients with asthma require well-trained healthcare professionals who combine technical competence with clinical expertise. Professional asthma training programmes must help students master medical knowledge about asthma, acquire clinical and decision-making skills needed for asthma diagnosis and management, and become effective patient teachers.

Methods: The NARTC, in collaboration with the AANPF, provides professional asthma education to nurse practitioners from all regions of the USA. Participants were surveyed before and after the course on a variety of clinical practice measures.

Results: Two hundred and two nurse practitioners enrolled and were sent pre-course questionnaires, 134 (66%) responded. One hundred and fifty-eight (78%) completed the course and were re-surveyed. 107 responded. Seventy-two returned both questionnaires. Analysis of all responses shows very strong evidence ($p < 0.001$) of an increase in mean score for establishing follow-up procedures, an

garrying out bronchodilator reversibility testing and exercising testing. There is also very strong evidence ($p < 0.001$) of an increase in identifying poor asthma control, forming structured treatment plans with patients, and providing written self-management plans. There is strong evidence ($p < 0.01$) of an increase in monitoring of peak expiratory flow rate, checking inhaler technique, and improving patient education.

Conclusions: The pre-course survey indicated active nurse practitioner involvement in asthma care with a concentration on general clinical assessment and education and less focus on structured long-term monitoring. Post-course results indicate a positive effect of the educational intervention on nurse knowledge, attitudes and practice in asthma care.

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