

DATA SNAPSHOT: Physical Therapists

Identifying and analyzing available data resources is a crucial step in assessing the supply and distribution of allied health occupations, their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, and the adequacy of the supply to meet industry and population needs. The report *Leveraging Data to Monitor the Allied Health Workforce: National Supply Estimates Using Different Data Sources*¹ (the background report for this Data Snapshot) compared national estimates of the supply and characteristics of nine allied health occupations using four national data sources: the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS), both data from the U.S. Census Bureau; the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the National Provider Identifier (NPI) Registry from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' National Plan and Provider Enumeration System. Using the most recent comparable data available from these sources, this Data Snapshot summarizes the national supply size and demographic, educational attainment, and employment information for physical therapists.

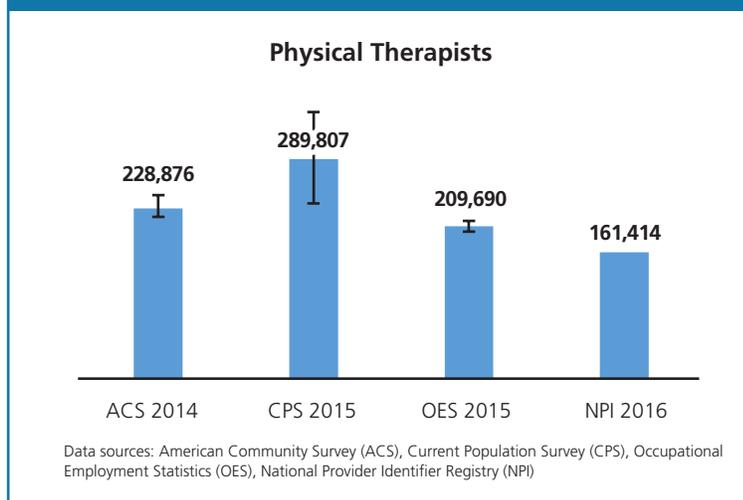
Who are physical therapists? Physical therapists work with ill and injured individuals to help improve movement and manage pain. Most physical therapists work in private offices and clinics, hospitals, and nursing homes. Physical therapists are required to be licensed by states.²

How are physical therapists identified across data sources? Physical therapists, in the ACS and CPS datasets, are identified by the four digit SOC code, 3160, and in the OES dataset by the occupation code 29-1123, or could be pulled directly from the OES website, data section. In the NPI Registry, physical therapists are identified using the following taxonomy codes: Physical Therapist - 22510000X, Cardiopulmonary - 2251C2600X, Electrophysiology, Clinical - 2251E1300X, Ergonomics - 2251E1200X, Geriatrics - 2251G0304X, Hand - 2251H1200X, Human Factors - 2251H1300X, Neurology - 2251N0400X, Orthopedic - 2251X0800X, Pediatrics - 2251P0200X, Sports - 2251S0007X.

National estimates of physical therapists across data sources: Data to estimate the supply of physical therapists were available in the ACS, CPS, OES, and NPPES NPI Registry. Demographic and socioeconomic data were available in the ACS and CPS data, and the OES had salary data. The NPI Registry had information only on the sex of the providers. The figure provides information on the supply of physical therapists from these four data sources. As shown in the Figure, the supply estimate of physical therapists from the CPS was 289,807 ($\pm 52,271$), from the ACS was 228,876 ($\pm 11,782$), and from the OES was 209,690 ($\pm 4,143$), and from the NPI Registry was 161,414. Because the NPI Registry represents the entire population of providers in the Registry, margins of error are not relevant. As described in the background report, lower supply estimates from the NPI Registry are to be expected because they represent the providers who obtain NPIs for billing or information exchange purposes.

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics: The table below provides information on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of physical therapists in the ACS, CPS and OES data sources. The mean age of physical therapists was in the range 41.3 to 42.8 years, with a slightly older estimate from the CPS. The proportions of the women working as physical therapists were between 68.5 to 80.3%, almost 12 percentage points higher in CPS compared to ACS. Similar to ACS, about 67% of physical

Estimated national supply of physical therapists from the ACS, OES, CPS, and NPI data sources



therapist were female in the NPI Registry (results not shown in the table). After non-White, not Hispanic, “other, not Hispanic” race was the largest racial/ethnic group among physical therapists estimated at 14.0% in the ACS and 7.5% in the CPS. Marital status was also similar as reported in the ACS and CPS data sources, with between 69.0 to 73.7% of physical therapists being married; between 9.9 to 10.3% divorced or separated or widowed, and between 16.3 to 20.6% single. In terms of educational attainment, the largest proportion of physical therapists had a master’s or higher degree: between 54.9 to 57.2%. The mean annual earnings, adjusted to 2015 U.S. dollars, was lowest in the CPS (\$60,318) and highest in the OES (\$85,790) estimates. The mean hours worked per week was about 38 hours in both the ACS and CPS. Between 77.7 to 80.0% of individuals reported working full-time between the two datasets.

REFERENCES:

1. Skillman SM, Dahal A, Frogner BK, Stubbs BA. Leveraging Data to Monitor the Allied Health Workforce: National Supply Estimates Using Different Data Sources. Center for Health Workforce Studies, University of Washington, Dec 2016.
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition, Physical Therapists*. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm> Accessed October 31, 2016.

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of physical therapists

	ACS 2014	CPS 2015	OES 2015
Age (mean years)	41.3	42.8	--
Female	68.5%	80.3%	--
Race/Ethnicity			
White, not Hispanic	75.8%	83.7%	--
Black, not Hispanic	5.1%	4.0%	--
Other, not Hispanic	14.0%	7.5%	--
Hispanic	5.1%	4.7%	--
Marital Status			
Married	69.0%	73.7%	--
Divorce/Separated/Widowed	10.3%	9.9%	--
Single	20.6%	16.3%	--
Educational Attainment			
High school or less	1.6%	4.0%	--
Some college	4.6%	9.7%	--
Bachelor’s degree	36.6%	31.5%	--
Master’s degree or more	57.2%	54.9%	--
Employment			
Annual earning (mean)*	\$64,318	\$60,313	\$85,790
Usual hours worked per week (mean)	38.4	37.8	--
Full-time workers**	80.0%	77.7%	--

* ACS 2014 earnings were adjusted to 2015 real dollar values based on the Consumer Price Index. ACS and CPS wage and salary earnings include reported income from all sources. OES wage earnings are annualized to represent a full-time average wage.

**Full-time indicates 32 or more weekly work hours.

Data sources: American Community Survey (ACS), Current Population Survey (CPS), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

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