



Dermatology practice trends and their consequences for employees

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ABSTRACT:

Background: For over ten years, the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) has carried out practice profile surveys to assess fluctuations in the availability and need for dermatology professionals in our field.

Methods: AAD members who practice dermatology receive the AAD Practice Profile Survey through a combination of electronic mail and traditional postal mail, reaching a randomly selected group of participants.

Results: There have been noticeable changes in the primary practice arrangements, with a decrease in the number of dermatologists operating independently and an increase in those working within group practices compared to previous periods. Additionally, the utilization of tele dermatology has exhibited an upward trajectory, rising from 9% to 15% between May 2021 and April 2022. Furthermore, the adoption of electronic health records experienced growth, jumping from 53% in 2021 to 74% in 2022.

Conclusion: The need for dermatology services continues to show robustness. Changes in the practice environment may be linked to rising operational expenses, partly attributed to the adoption of technology-driven medical records. The incorporation of electronic health records and the utilization of telemedicine are on the rise.

Keywords: American Academy of Dermatology, Dermatology Professionals.

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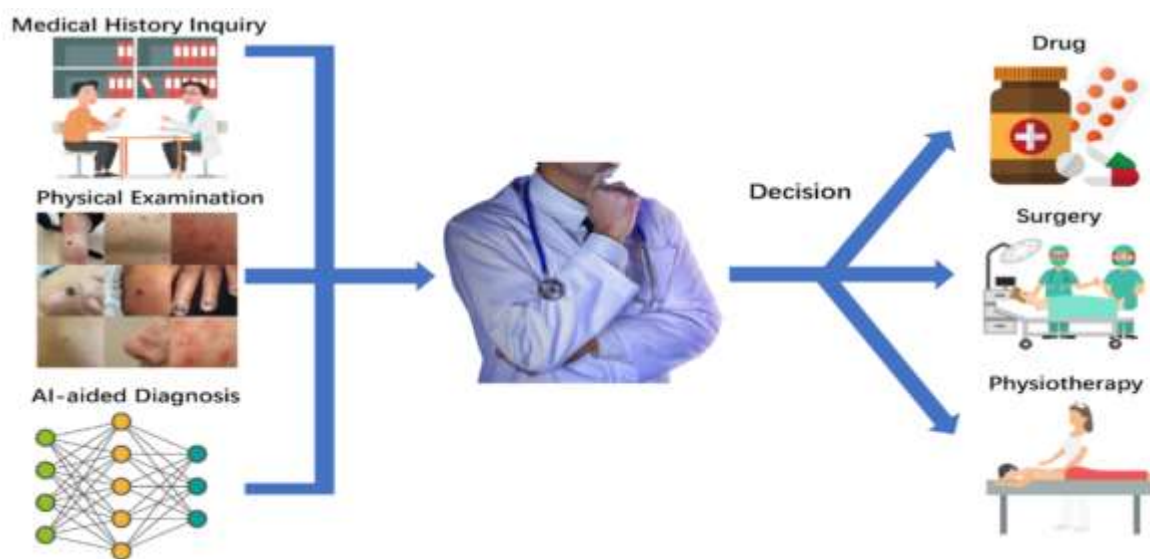
INTRODUCTION:

In the ever-evolving field of dermatology, practice trends play a crucial role in shaping the dynamics and outcomes for both the patients and the employees within the industry [1]. As advancements in technology and shifts in patient preferences continue to influence the landscape of dermatological care, it is essential to explore the consequences these trends have on the professionals working in the field. One significant trend that has emerged in recent years is the increasing utilization of telemedicine in dermatology practices

[2]. With the advent of secure video conferencing platforms and high-resolution imaging, healthcare providers can now remotely diagnose and treat a wide range of skin conditions. While this trend has undoubtedly brought about convenience and accessibility for patients, it has also introduced a series of implications for the employees within dermatology practices [3]. On one hand, healthcare professionals may experience a reduction in direct patient interaction, leading to a potential loss of the interpersonal connections and satisfaction derived from face-to-face consultations [4]. On the other hand, telemedicine offers opportunities for dermatologists to reach a broader patient base and improve their work-life balance, as it allows for flexible scheduling and reduced commuting time [5].

Another consequential trend is the rising demand for cosmetic dermatology procedures. As societal standards of beauty continue to evolve, more individuals are seeking aesthetic treatments to enhance their appearance. This trend has led to a surge in demand for procedures such as injectables, laser treatments, and body contouring, thereby expanding the scope of services provided by dermatology practices [6]. While this presents opportunities for growth and increased revenue, it also places additional pressure on dermatology employees. They must stay updated with the latest techniques and technologies, often requiring continuous training and professional development to meet the evolving needs and expectations of patients. Furthermore, the incorporation of electronic health records (EHRs) into dermatology practices has streamlined patient management and improved data accessibility [7-9]. However, this transition has not been without its challenges for employees. The digital documentation process can be time-consuming and may require additional training to ensure accurate and efficient record-keeping [10]. Moreover, concerns about patient privacy and data security have become more prominent, necessitating stringent protocols and compliance measures within dermatology practices. The ongoing trends in dermatology practices have far-reaching consequences for the employees working within the field [11]. The integration of telemedicine, the rise of cosmetic dermatology, and the implementation of EHR systems all have significant implications for professionals in terms of job satisfaction, skill development, and workload management [12]. Recognizing and addressing these consequences is crucial to ensure the well-being of employees and the continued provision of high-quality dermatological care [13].

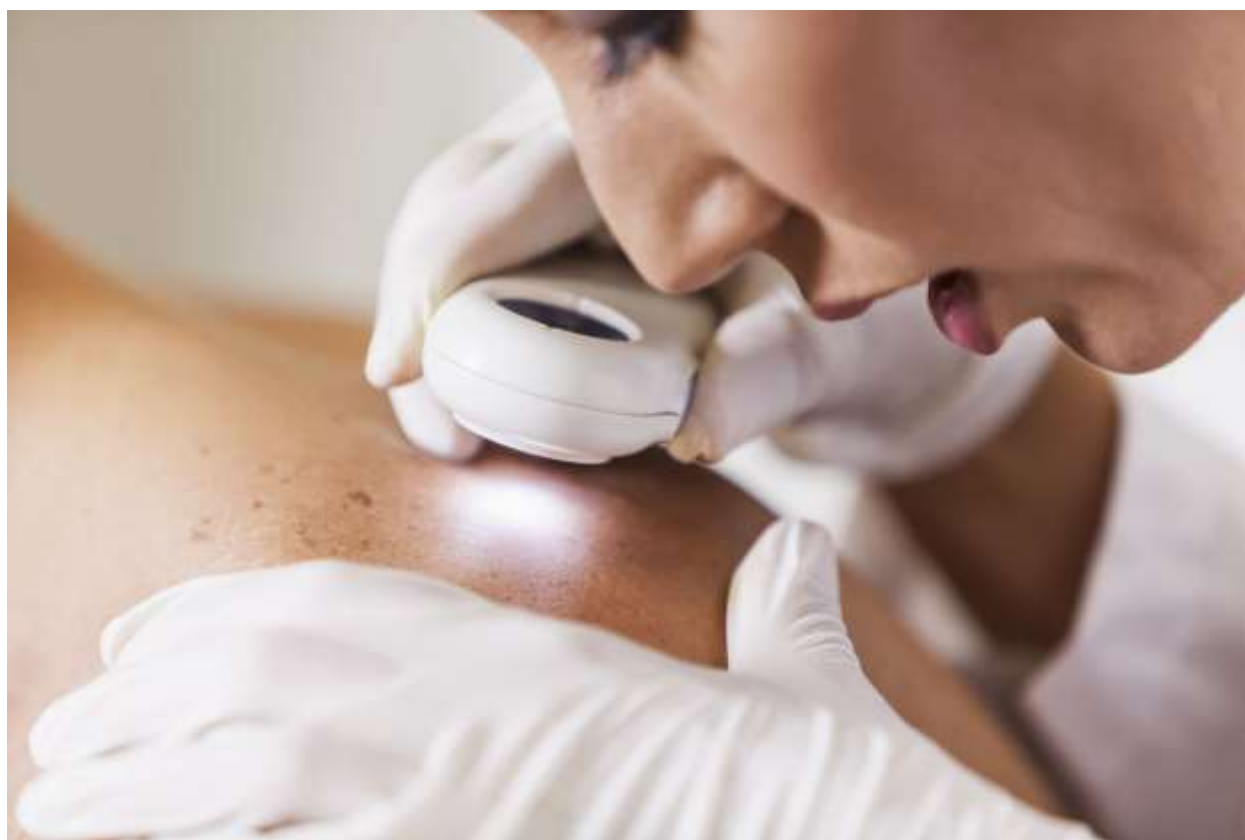
Image 1:



Advancements in technology and the progression of our healthcare system will bring about alterations in the factors that stimulate the demand for dermatology services in Pakistan. In 1989, Peyton Weary

emphasized the necessity for cost-effective and high-quality care for skin diseases, along with the refinement of dermatologic skills, to ensure the competitiveness of the dermatology field. Presently, the provision of cost-efficient healthcare must adhere to the evolving constraints imposed by electronic health records and government-mandated programs [14]. Dermatologists may encounter potential limitations such as the implementation of EHRs and involvement in the Physician Quality Reporting System and accountable care organizations [15]. These driving forces have relevance when discussing the supply and demand of dermatology services. Resneck, in his article commemorating the 76th anniversary of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), emphasized that dermatologists must maintain expertise in various domains to sustain the demand for their services. Consequently, the ability of dermatologists to adapt to the complexities of this healthcare system and technological advancements is crucial for the future success of our specialty [16].

Image 2:



This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the findings from the AAD 2021 Dermatology Practice Profile Survey. It will delve into the outcomes of recent inquiries and draw comparisons with data from previous years [17]. Specifically, it will explore the evolving patterns within the dermatology workforce, highlighting the impact of technology-driven transformations, the availability of dermatologists, variations in practice settings, and the role of non-dermatologist physician extenders. By examining these aspects, a comprehensive understanding of the current state of dermatology practices will be established [18].

METHODOLOGY:

This methodology aims to investigate the current trends in dermatology practices and their potential consequences for employees. Dermatology is a rapidly evolving field, and understanding how these trends

impact the workforce is crucial for ensuring employee well-being and optimizing productivity. The following steps outline the methodology for conducting this study.

Literature Review: Conduct an extensive review of relevant literature, including academic papers, industry reports, and reputable online sources. This step will provide a comprehensive understanding of the latest trends in dermatology practices, such as technological advancements, changes in patient demographics, and emerging treatment modalities.

Data Collection: Utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. This may involve conducting interviews or surveys with dermatologists, dermatology practice managers, and employees in various roles (e.g., physicians, nurses, administrative staff). The data will focus on identifying the specific trends observed in dermatology practices and their potential implications for employees.

Trend Analysis: Analyze the collected data to identify the prominent trends in dermatology practices. Categorize the trends based on their nature, such as changes in patient volume, increased use of telemedicine, implementation of electronic health records, or the rise of cosmetic dermatology. Identify the potential consequences of these trends for employees, considering factors such as workload, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and career prospects.

Employee Perspectives: Conduct in-depth interviews or focus groups with employees to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions related to the identified trends. This qualitative data will provide a deeper understanding of the consequences of these trends and help capture the subjective experiences of the employees.

Cross-Validation: Compare and cross-validate the findings from the interviews, surveys, and literature review to ensure reliability and consistency of the results. Identify common themes, patterns, and discrepancies among the different sources of data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of dermatology practice trends for employees.

Recommendations: Based on the findings, develop recommendations to address the identified consequences and challenges faced by employees in dermatology practices. These recommendations may include strategies for improving employee well-being, enhancing training programs, implementing technology effectively, and fostering a supportive work environment.

By following this methodology, a comprehensive understanding of the current trends in dermatology practices and their consequences for employees can be obtained. The findings will contribute to improving employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being in the dermatology workforce, leading to better patient care and outcomes.

RESULTS:

Dermatology practice trends have evolved significantly in recent years, bringing about notable consequences for employees in the field. These trends encompass various aspects, including technological advancements, changes in patient demographics, and shifts in healthcare policies. The consequences can be both positive and negative, with some employees benefiting from new opportunities while others face challenges. One prominent trend is the integration of technology into dermatology practices. Electronic health records (EHRs) have become commonplace, streamlining patient documentation and facilitating communication between healthcare providers. While this has improved efficiency, some employees may face a learning curve in adapting to new systems, requiring additional training and adjustment periods.

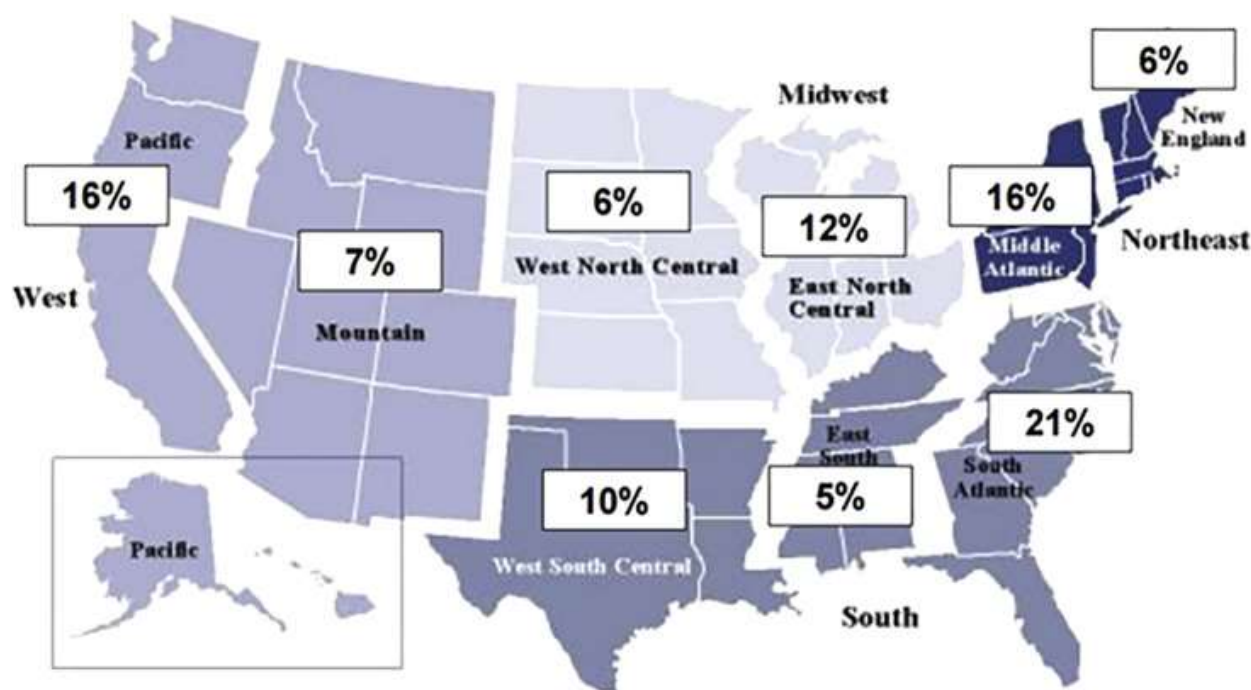
Table 1: Tele dermatology applications in basic care:

Basic care	Use of tele dermatology					
	Total		No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dermatology set having 2 dermatologists	299	14.9%	14	4.0%	286	96.0%

Solo	698	35.9%	33	5.8%	664	95.3%
Dermatology set having \$6 dermatologists	193	9.5%	10	5.3%	184	94.7%
Dermatology set having 3-5 dermatologists	328	16.4%	18	4.1%	321	97.0%
Academic	178	8.8%	62	34.7%	115	65.3%
Multispecialty group	255	12.6%	56	21.7%	198	78.3%
Military	23	1.2%	15	60.4%	11	42.6%
VA	27	1.3%	16	62.1%	11	42.7%

Out of the 7050 randomly selected individuals, a total of 2021 participants completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 29.6%. The response rates have shown consistency over time, with 33% in 2009, 29.7% in 2019, and 35.2% in 2012. To examine potential response bias, a comparison was made between the age, sex, and geographic location of the respondents and the overall survey population. On average, the survey respondents were 1.4 years older and included 4.2% more male dermatologists compared to the survey population. Geographically, the differences in the percentages of respondents from each Pakistan Census region were less than 1.4%. These slight variances between the two groups indicate that the respondent group represents all eligible members included in the study. Therefore, it is likely that the survey respondents accurately represent the practicing dermatologists who are members of the AAD in the United States. With a sample size of 2021 respondents, the margin of error is approximately plus or minus 3.1% with a 96% confidence level. The majority of responders are concentrated on the East and West coasts, which corresponds to the distribution of the survey population as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1:



Furthermore, telemedicine has gained traction in dermatology, allowing for remote consultations and follow-ups. This trend presents advantages such as increased access to care, reduced wait times, and flexible work arrangements for employees. However, it may also lead to reduced in-person interactions, potentially affecting the rapport and relationship-building aspects of patient care. Another consequence of evolving

dermatology practice trends is the changing patient demographics. An aging population and increased awareness of skin health have resulted in a higher demand for dermatological services. This has led to greater workloads for employees, potentially causing burnout and stress. Additionally, cultural and language diversity among patients may require employees to acquire new skills to provide culturally competent care and ensure effective communication.

Healthcare policy changes, such as shifts in insurance coverage and reimbursement models, have also impacted dermatology practices and their employees. These changes often bring administrative burdens, as employees may need to navigate complex billing and coding requirements. Moreover, reimbursement cuts and increased administrative tasks can contribute to financial pressures on dermatology practices, potentially leading to hiring freezes or reduced employee benefits.

Dermatology practice trends have consequences for employees that arise from technological advancements, changes in patient demographics, and healthcare policy shifts. While some employees may benefit from new opportunities and improved efficiency, others may face challenges related to adapting to technology, increased workloads, and administrative burdens. It is crucial for dermatology practices to support their employees through adequate training, resources, and a focus on work-life balance to mitigate potential negative consequences and ensure the provision of quality care in an evolving healthcare landscape.

Table 2:

Category	N	Percentage
Dermal Nereus	196	100%
Face-face	105	54.1
Diagnosis	29	15.2
Seborrheic	2	0.6
Angioma	38	18.3
Benign	7	4.2
Actinic keratosis	9	5.0
Melanoma	2	0.6
Carcinoma	2	0.6
Not classified	6	3.1
Squamous	2	0.6
Basal cell	4	2.3

DISCUSSION:

The field of dermatology has experienced significant practice trends in recent years, and these changes have had both positive and negative consequences for employees in the industry [18]. Let's delve into a discussion of these trends and their impact on the workforce. One notable trend is the increasing use of technology in dermatology practices [19]. Technological advancements, such as electronic health records and telemedicine, have streamlined processes and improved patient care in many ways. EHRs, for example, have made documentation more efficient, allowing employees to access patient records easily. However, the transition to EHRs may require additional training for employees, and some may initially find it challenging to navigate these new systems effectively [20].

Telemedicine has also gained prominence in dermatology, enabling remote consultations and follow-ups. This trend has brought convenience for both patients and employees, as it eliminates the need for in-person visits and allows for flexible work arrangements [21]. However, it may reduce the personal interaction that employees have with patients, potentially impacting the patient-provider relationship and the ability to perform thorough physical examinations. Changes in patient demographics have also influenced

dermatology practices [22]. An aging population and increased awareness of skin health have led to a higher demand for dermatological services [23]. While this presents new opportunities for employees, such as job security and career growth, it can also result in heavier workloads and increased stress. Employees may face challenges in managing the increased volume of patients while maintaining the quality of care and managing their own well-being [24].

Moreover, healthcare policies and reimbursement models have had consequences for dermatology employees. Policy changes, such as shifts in insurance coverage and reimbursement rates, have introduced administrative complexities [25]. Employees may need to navigate intricate billing and coding requirements, which can be time-consuming and burdensome. Reduced reimbursement rates can also put financial strain on practices, potentially affecting employee benefits and job stability [26].

In response to these trends and consequences, it is crucial for dermatology practices to prioritize employee support. This includes providing comprehensive training programs for new technologies, offering resources for managing increased workloads, and promoting work-life balance to mitigate stress and burnout [27]. Additionally, practices should advocate for fair reimbursement rates and strive for efficient administrative processes to alleviate the burdens on employees.

Dermatology practice trends have brought about significant consequences for employees [28]. The integration of technology, changes in patient demographics, and evolving healthcare policies all impact the workforce in various ways. By recognizing these consequences and implementing supportive measures, dermatology practices can ensure that employees are equipped to navigate the changing landscape while maintaining the delivery of quality care to patients.

To navigate these consequences successfully, dermatology practices must prioritize employee support and well-being. Providing comprehensive training programs and resources for new technologies can ease the transition and ensure employees can utilize them effectively. Practices should also consider strategies to manage increased workloads, such as implementing efficient scheduling systems and considering additional staffing when necessary. Promoting work-life balance and addressing burnout through measures like flexible work arrangements and employee wellness programs can improve job satisfaction and retention [29].

Furthermore, advocacy for fair reimbursement rates and streamlined administrative processes is crucial to alleviate the burden on employees and ensure financial stability for practices. Collaboration with professional associations and engagement in policy discussions can help shape regulations that are favorable to both patients and employees in the field. By proactively addressing the consequences of dermatology practice trends, practices can create a supportive and empowering work environment. This, in turn, leads to enhanced patient care outcomes and a more sustainable healthcare system. The continued adaptation to new technologies, patient demographics, and policy changes will require ongoing investment in employee development and well-being [30]. Ultimately, by valuing and supporting their employees, dermatology practices can thrive in the face of evolving trends and continue to provide quality care to patients while fostering a positive and fulfilling work environment [31].

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the evolving trends in dermatology practices have had far-reaching consequences for employees, both positive and negative. The integration of technology, such as electronic health records and telemedicine, has enhanced efficiency and accessibility, but it has also required employees to adapt to new systems and potentially impacted the personal connection with patients. The changing patient demographics, with an aging population and increased awareness of skin health, have presented opportunities for employees, but also challenges in managing heavier workloads and maintaining quality care. Additionally, healthcare policy changes and reimbursement models have introduced administrative complexities and financial pressures on practices, which can trickle down to employee benefits and job stability.

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