

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/the-productivity-of-professions/>

The paper examines the productivity of physicians and nurse practitioners (NPs) in the U.S. healthcare system, where there is rising demand for healthcare services but a relatively fixed supply of physicians. This video video context has increased the reliance on NPs as substitutes for physicians, particularly in emergency department settings. The study utilizes data from the Veterans Health Administration, which in 2016 allowed NPs to practice independently.

The findings reveal that NPs generally treat healthier patients compared to physicians, which complicates direct comparisons of their outcomes. To address this, the research employs quasi-random variation in the number of NPs on duty to assess treatment outcomes and resource use. The results indicate that while NPs incur higher medical costs for patients, they often achieve poorer treatment outcomes on average. Nonetheless, there is considerable variability in productivity within both occupations, with some NPs outperforming average physicians.

The paper suggests that experience may contribute to this productivity gap, as NPs with more experience tend to perform better. The findings recommend that healthcare systems should focus on optimal patient assignments between physicians and NPs, especially for less complex cases where NPs can perform comparably or even better than physicians. Additionally, it emphasizes exploring collaboration between the two roles to maximize patient care efficiency. Overall, the study contributes to ongoing discussions around the roles of NPs in healthcare delivery and the impact of occupational licensing on professional quality.