



Informing Research and Policy through Social Work Practice

PRN Datagram.....PRN Datagram.....PRN Datagram.....

Research Methodology
PRN 1, 5, 2001

What is NASW's Practice Research Network?

With funding support from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, NASW created the concept of a Practice Research Network (PRN). NASW is designing a series of practice-based research surveys that will build the information resources of the social work profession. The first survey included elements about client and provider demographics as well as more detailed information about substance abuse treatment. The goal of the PRN project is to collect data from social work practitioners and use the data to develop best practices, inform policy, and improve service delivery.

PRN Working Group

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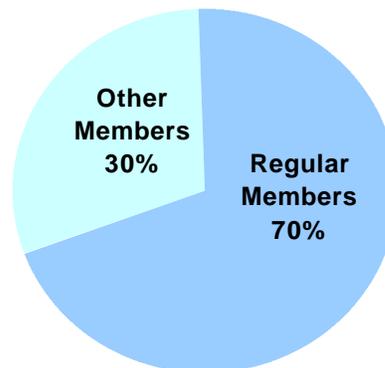
Practice Research Survey 2000

- Conducted in April 2000
- Administered to 2,000 NASW regular members
- Response rate of 81% - making the data highly representative. Margin of error of +/- 2.4% at the 95% confidence level.

The NASW Practice Research Network Working Group was established and convened to develop goals and objectives for the NASW PRN and to design the initial survey instrument. CSAT designated a number of variables for the survey that were of primary importance and significance to them. In addition, the NASW PRN developed additional variables of interest to the profession. The final research proposal and survey questionnaire were approved in collaboration with CSAT.

This research was a cross-sectional survey of members holding regular memberships in NASW. A representative sample of NASW members (N=2000) was selected from the total population of NASW regular members (N=100,742). Student members, transitional members and those with foreign addresses were excluded from the sample. The sample was selected using a selection interval of 50.285 with a random start between 1 and 51. The sample was reviewed for periodicity and no evidence of such was found.

NASW Membership

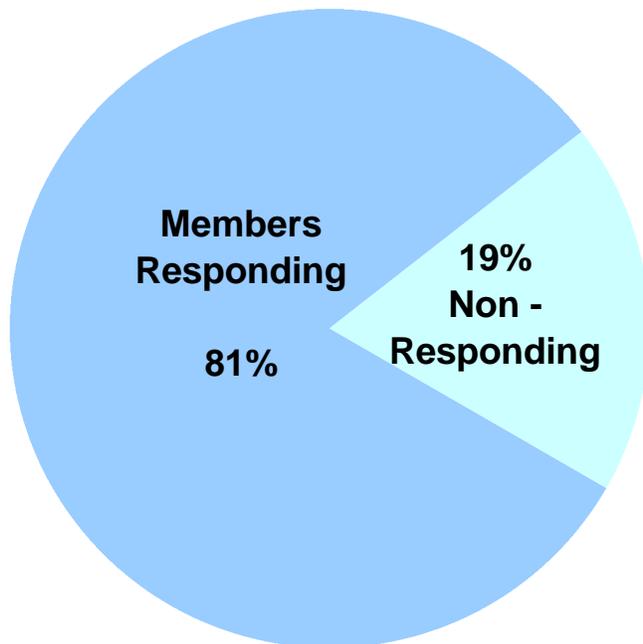


Personalized letters about the survey were mailed to survey participants several days prior to mailing the survey packets. Survey packets were mailed on April 6, 2000, and included the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Several data collection strategies were incorporated in order to yield a significant response rate. Postcard reminders were sent one week after the survey mailing to those participants who had not yet responded. A follow-up e-mail reminder was sent on April 20, 2000; three weeks after the initial survey mailing, a second survey packet was sent to the non-respondents followed by a final postcard reminder on May 3, 2000 and an e-mail reminder on May 10, 2000.

Data collection was closed on June 2, 2000 with a response rate of 81%. The sampling techniques and high response rate minimized the potential for selectivity and non-response bias. Therefore, the results can be considered representative of U.S. NASW regular members. The margin for error for the total sample is ±2.4% at the 95th confidence interval.

PRELIMINARY SURVEY FINDINGS

NASW PRN Survey Response Rate



- 79% of members are female
- 89% of members are white
- The median age of members is 48
- 91% of members hold a master's degree in social work
- Members have 16 years of social work experience (median)
- 93% of members hold state licensure, certification or registration
- The median income for those employed full-time is \$45,660
- 39% identify mental health as their primary practice area
- 59% identify direct practice as their principal role