Background

• Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an immunemediated demyelinating and autoimmune disorder that is a chronic and progressive condition with various symptoms manifested during its long clinical course. Patients may experience fatigue, sleep disturbance, and anemia.

• Management of symptoms requires a MS specialist interdisciplinary team consisting of the following: occupational therapist, physical therapist, nutritional therapist, hospital, speech language pathologist, neuropsychologist, psychologist, neurologist, social worker, speech pathologist, and nurse who works closely with the specialist and the patient's care team.

• MS certification for nurses has shown to increase their autonomy, patient satisfaction, collaboration, patient referrals from other disciplines, and consultation with other team members.

• The sample comprised of various MS care settings and specialties: Long Term Care Rehabilitation, Private Practice, Academic Institution, etc. The majority of participants worked in outpatient centers followed by academic institutions and other MS Center Programs.

• The sample consisted mostly of physical therapists and occupational therapists (41.5% and 15.9% respectively). Fewer physician assistants worked with MS, with 7.9% of the sample. The remaining 31.2% of participants included insufficient nursing resources (time, staff, and space); lack recognition of MS as a specialty area; and possibly others.

Method

• The purpose of the study was to assess nurses’ perceptions of certification and barriers to re-certification of MS specialists.

• A single-item, had anchors 1 to 5, was used to measure perceived professional credibility and to determine re-certification status (MSIC, Berlin & Gulick, 2005).

• The sample of current certified MS specialists from specialty areas included Physical Therapists (41.5%), Occupational Therapists (15.9%); and fewer Physician Assistants (3.8%); Social Workers (2.5%); and others. Data collection included descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, factor analysis, and alpha reliability procedures.

• Specific challenges and barriers to MS specialist certification are identified and can be used to encourage re-certification.

• Some of the reasons cited by study participants for lapsed re-certification included retirement, no longer worked with MS patients, insufficient time for testing and collaboration with other disciplines.

• The sample consisted of certified and lapsed MS specialists.

• The sample size was adequate for statistical testing and included 164 participants.

• Pearson Correlations Between PVCT, PCBS, and Overall Satisfaction Scale.

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Values and Challenges of MS Specialist Certification

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College of Nursing
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Newark, New Jersey, USA

Eigen Values and Reliability Coefficients for PVCT and PCBS Subscales and Total Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>PVCT Sub 1</th>
<th>PVCT Sub 2</th>
<th>PVCT Sub 3</th>
<th>PVCT Sub 4</th>
<th>Perceived Challenges and Barriers Scale (PCBS) Total</th>
<th>PCBS Sub 1</th>
<th>PCBS Sub 2</th>
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<td>Total PCBS</td>
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<td>Subscale 1</td>
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<td>Subscale 3</td>
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<td>Subscale 4</td>
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Pearson Correlations Between PVCT, PCBS, and Overall Satisfaction Scale

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<th>PCBS</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction</th>
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<td>PVCT</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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Comparison of Values of certified and lapsed MS specialists

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<th>Lapsed</th>
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<td>PCBS</td>
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<td>2.43</td>
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