Sierra Holsclaw

Robert Klase

Physician Assistant

BetterMed Urgent Care

Exercise Science

1. Job responsibilities:  What are the major job responsibilities of this position?

Robert said his responsibilities varies depending on the location or venue of practice.  There are highly clinical settings in which a PA can practice - Emergency Room, Surgery - all areas of surgery, primary care medicine, and there are more managerial positions.  The typically universal responsibilities for clinically practicing PAs are:

Perform a medical history on the patient to find out what the symptoms of the problem are, evaluating and examining patients, reaching a diagnosis and then a treatment plan based on those findings.

1. A Day in the Life Of…: Describe “a day in the life” and “a week in the life” of this individual.

His answer was that he typically will see 30-60 patients in a 12 hour day.  Currently working in an urgent care setting, he will be treating anything from upper respiratory infections, pneumonia, rashes, abscesses, to heart attacks, pulmonary embolisms (blood clot to the lungs), broken bones.

1. Education:  What educational background is required for this position?  What specific skills are needed to perform this job?  What classes from an undergraduate degree are most useful to the performance of this job?  What, if any, are the needs for more education/skill training after getting the job?

Robert told me the minimum requirement to become a PA at present is a bachelors degree from an accredited Physician Assistant program and then passing a national certification examination and obtaining a state license.

The skills are again variable depending on the practice setting.

The knowledge of anatomy and physiology are integral to being able to perform as a PA in most practice settings.

There is typically extensive on the job training once a PA obtains a job in a particular field of medicine. The nuances of each specialty are not able to be covered in the PA training programs. Those specifics are particular to the specialty. He also said there are bi-annual continuing education requirements of 100 hours and currently a re-certification test every 6 years. (This is currently being revised to every 10 years)

1. Career Issues:  How does the person’s current position relate to a whole career (current job is culmination or one stage along the path – what does the career path look like)?

Robert explained that most PA jobs are the culmination of the career, but there are many PA's who return to the education process to become Physicians.  However, there are currently no mainstream paths to do so without returning to med school and going through the same process as someone coming from college with a biology/pre-med degree. He said there are some situations in which the PA may lead to a managerial role, but this is not a typical step.

1. Personal Response:  Prior to this interview, what were your assumptions/ideas about this career?  How have your ideas changed since the interview, if at all?  How well do you think you would fit into this position, given your knowledge about your own interests, values and abilities?  What are your overall impressions of this position and this career field in general?

Before this interview, this was my number one career choice. After the interview, I feel the same way. I think I will fit in great with this position because I like the feeling of helping people and being on my feet. Also, I am a critical thinker, which Robert said would fit in great in the PA field. My overall impression of this position is that it Is a great job and pays really well.

The following are suggested interview questions.  You must answer at least 5 questions worth 10 points each (10 pts = excellent; 6 pts = average; 4pt = attempted in good faith; 0 pts = did not answer) for a total of **50 points**.

1. What Exercise Science subdiscipline interested you most?

Robert said he has an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science with an Athletic Training focus and worked as an Athletic Trainer for 3 years before returning to school to become a PA.

1. What discipline/specific skills/knowledge from specific courses do you actually use on the job?  What particular courses of those you took have been helpful/relevant?

Robert Klase answered by saying “My orthopedic evaluation experience from Athletic Training has been very valuable.  Most other PA's without the same background do not have those skills.  They were helpful during the period of time in which I worked for an orthopedic practice as well as while working in the emergency room”.

1. What do you do daily?  Weekly?  Monthly?  Yearly?  What percentage of your time on the job is spent in the various Exercise Science job functions (exercise testing, exercise prescription, education, nutritional analysis, etc.)
2. What are the high points and low points of this job?  What are the high points and low points of your career?

He explained there have been many of both, tough question. His high points have been during certain patient encounters in which he was able to make a tough diagnosis and start them on a plan of treatment to fix it. Also, he had some moments in which a particularly difficult procedure he performed went well. The low points have been similar situations that did not go as well. There are also moments when some patients are particularly difficult to deal with and do not appear to appreciate me as a provider.

1. What kind of people do well in this career area?  Why did you select this area?

He said critical thinkers do well. You need to be able to approach a situation with a thought process to eliminate or include certain diagnoses.  Wrote memorization is helpful, but there is also a lot of intuitive thought which becomes necessary.

1. What is the sense of where the jobs are in the field (geographically; city/urban/suburban/country; service, consulting vs. hands-on, etc.)

Robert said the jobs are literally everywhere geographically within the US.  There are PAs in other countries, but I can't say which ones and if they practice in the same capacity as in the US. There are not an abundance of consulting positions that I am aware of, but I'm sure they exist.

1. Are there areas of educational specialization that should be considered either during or after an undergrad degree?

He said none that are required to practice, but there are some residency programs available to further the training and education.

1. Are educational updates or higher education degrees necessary?

His answer was see #3 on first part.

1. What does a career-long path look like in this field?  What sorts of preparation for the future and/or changes of jobs or companies would one expect along the way?
2. What changes have you noticed or do you expect in your field?

Currently there is a proposed plan to increase the autonomy of practicing PAs.  It's not entirely clear how this is going to impact future PA practice.

1. With your degree, you chose this particular career path.  What other career opportunities did you/do you have?  Why might you not have taken a particular path that was possible for you, given your educational background?

He said “I considered going to med school.  I was in my late 20's when I decided to go back to school and didn't feel the time investment was going to be worth it”.

1. Other questions that you, the interviewer, may have for the professional, such as other questions that might be suggested during the interview itself.  Or, are there other interesting facts or comments might the interviewee wish to share that were not covered in this list of suggested questions?