BACKGROUND

To meet the challenge of providing access and better care of hypertension to Mississippians, the Mississippi State Department of Health's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program created the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative (MHSI). The goal of the program is to improve the quality of care strategies for patients by increasing physicians' knowledge and skills in managing complex, treatment resistant forms of hypertension and increasing the number of certified hypertension specialists in Mississippi.

OBJECTIVE

To examine the clinical practice characteristics and technology usage of Mississippi physicians recruited during the first year of MHSI.

METHOD

Mississippi physicians were recruited to participate in a two-day clinical review course to prepare for the American Society of Hypertension Specialist (ASH) Exam. Prior to participating the two day-clinical review course, Mississippi physicians completed a survey including questions on their medical practice, demographics, and current technology use. Frequency analysis using SPSS 21.0 was conducted on responses to survey questions.

RESULTS

Thirty-three out of the 37 physicians who participated in the ASH prep course completed the survey (89.2% response rate, n=33). Mostly, the physicians were male (69.2%), white (46.2%), had more than twenty years experience as a practicing medical doctor (66.7%).

DISCUSSION

- Examining Mississippi physicians' practice and technology usage provided understanding of their delivery of health care services.
- Mississippi physicians who participated in the ASH prep course had many years of experience and utilized technological support mechanisms in their day-to-day clinical practice.
- An overwhelming majority of the physicians reported that they routinely use computer-based decision support tools in their practice. This demonstrates that MHSI recruitment is effectively targeting physicians whose practices have pre-requisite qualifications for them to become a designated hypertension specialist.