INTRODUCTION
The Orthopaedic Nurses Certification Board (ONCB) develops, maintains, and administers the only orthopaedic certification exams for registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists in the United States. Specialty nursing certification aims to protect consumers by awarding nurses with credentials that publicly demonstrate the nurse’s knowledge and ability to meet standards of practice. Since its beginning in 1988, the ONCB has conducted a role delineation study every five years to determine the current tasks performed and the musculoskeletal health conditions seen by orthopaedic registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists. Collecting this data enables the ONCB to identify current practice patterns and to validate and revise the content of future orthopaedic certification examinations. Currently more than 6,000 nurses hold the ONC® credential, and slightly more than 100 advanced practice nurses, APNs, hold the ONP-C® and OCNS-C® credentials.

METHODOLOGY
In 2010, the ONCB Test Committee developed a 30 minute online survey which was distributed to 5,634 RNs, NPs, and CNSs working in orthopaedic practices with known email addresses from lists of both NAON members and ONCB certificants. The committee then selected specific tasks and linked knowledge statements related to orthopaedic practice. These were categorized into 11 domains. The first 5 domains (clinician/practitioner, educator, manager, consultant, and researcher) are related to the roles of NPs and CNSs. The remaining 6 domains represent key activities and knowledge of orthopaedic RNs who may earn the ONC® credential (self-care, pain, complications, activity, nutrition, and psychosocial needs). Survey respondents were asked to rate the significance of each statement by choosing one of the options on a scale where 0= Not necessary for my job, 1= minimally significant, 2= moderately significant, 3= significant, 4= very significant, and 5= extremely significant.

RESPONDENTS
Of the 5,634 emails sent, 1,194 valid responses were returned. After allowance for bad addresses, this represented a response rate of 22.7% which is very acceptable for a role delineation study. The high percentage of RN respondents is representative of the specialty.

FINDINGS
When asked about each of the 62 knowledge statements or the 157 task statements, the respondents selected from 0-5 on the significance scale. Mean ratings for each statement were calculated if some level of significance applied. Items with a higher mean rating are considered to be more significant to practice. The first 54 task statements were specific to the APN roles. Of the 103 tasks for the RN group, six tasks scored less than 3.15 in significance to practice and were deleted from consideration for the exam.

DISCUSSION
The data collected in this role delineation study were used to evaluate the current exam specifications and to assure that the items on the exam reflect current orthopaedic nursing practice of the three roles. The new test blueprint, which was derived from this study, shows the number of items for each role and in each condition and implemented in March 2012.

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