

# Acupuncture Today's Expanding Acupuncture Practice Survey

## Executive Summary

October 2015

A RESEARCH REPORT BY



## METHODOLOGY

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This survey was initiated on October 7, 2015 by MPA Media, publishers of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, *Acupuncture Today*, *Massage Today* and *Dynamic Chiropractic Practice Insights*. The survey was sent to 31,823 acupuncture practitioners via email. The response rate was just over one-and-a-half percent (1.51%).

Like all online surveys, participants tend to “self-select” based upon their interest in the topic presented.

## DISCUSSION

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This survey is designed to help establish the opinions of acupuncture practitioners in relation to the products and services they are looking to use and sell as they expand their practices. The responses to many of these questions are examined further based upon the number of years the respondents have been in acupuncture practice.

In reviewing responses to the first question, we see that a little less than half (46%) of acupuncture practitioners expect to increase the products and services they offer to their patients, 52% expect they will offer about the same, and only 2% intend to decrease the products and services they offer their patients. When broken down by years in practice, practitioners who have been practicing for less than five years are much more likely to increase the products and services they offer their patients.

An analysis of the data shows more than two-thirds (69%) of respondents have at least one product or service they are “thinking about” offering to their patients. While this contradicts the response to Question #1, it suggests most practitioners are at least thinking about adding specific products and services.

Next, we asked acupuncture practitioners what percentage of their patients they currently sell products to, with 41% responding they sell products to half or more of their patients. With the exception of practitioners with 20-24 years of practice experience, acupuncture practitioners who have been in practice longer are more likely to offer products to at least half their patients.

Responses to Question #3 reveal that the percentage of respondents already offering various products to their patients ranges from 6% (pillows) to 72% (herbs granular/capsules). The percentage of acupuncture practitioners who are “thinking about” adding new products ranges from 5% to 13%, with weight-loss products (13%), anti-aging products (11%), herbs-liquid (11%), homeopathic remedies (10%) and nutritional supplements (10%) leading the list. The data show that approximately 45% of respondents are “thinking about” offering one or more of these products to their patients.

Adding additional services is another way practitioners can expand their practice. Responses to Question #4 show the range of services acupuncture practitioners currently offer their patients. Services offered range

from 18% (laser services) to 83% (cupping). The percentage of practitioners “thinking about adding” new services ranges from 4% to 30%, with e-newsletter (30%), practice-management software (19%), lab testing/services (17%), laser services (17%), weight-loss services (14%) and facial rejuvenation (13%) leading. Again, according to the data, almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents are “thinking about” offering one or more of the listed services to their patients.

Next, we asked acupuncture practitioners where they find information about new products and services to use in their practice or offer to their patients. More than half of respondents preferred colleagues (71%), seminars (66%), the Internet (59%) and trade publications (55%) as the best way to learn about new products and services. While social media came in last, with total respondents at only 20%, it was higher with acupuncture practitioners in practice nine years or less. Those practicing five years or more tended to be more reliant on trade publications, with the exception of those practicing 25 years or more.

Question #6 presented seven generalized practice styles and sought to understand the percentage of practitioners participating in each form of practice. On the surface, we see 71% of acupuncture practitioners still practice a more traditional form of acupuncture (either solo or with other acupuncture practitioners), in which at least 90% of their revenue comes from acupuncture and herbs. Of the remaining 29%, about half (13%) rely on other services and products for at least 20% of their revenue. The final 15% (approximately 4,500 acupuncture practitioners) have adopted a different style of practice that involves working with non-acupuncture providers (12%) or offering other services and products that drive more than half their revenue (3%).

As you might expect, there is a difference between the type of practice chosen by an acupuncture practitioner in their first five years of practice vs. one who has been practicing for 25 years or more:

- Practitioners practicing for less than 25 years are more likely to be in an integrated or interdisciplinary practice.
- Those practicing 25 years or more are more likely to be in broad-scope practices.
- The more years a practitioner has been in practice, the less likely they are to be in a multiple-practitioner practice.

The next question asked practitioners for the percentage of their revenue that comes from third-party payers. Only 16% of the profession relies on third-party payers for most of their revenue. Thirty-nine percent of respondents don't receive any revenue from third-party payers.

Again, responses varied depending on number of years in practice:

- Practitioners practicing for 20-14 years rely more on third-party payers, with 10% receiving “almost all” of their revenue from third-party payers and another 18% receiving about 75%.
- Practitioners in practice for less than five years and those practicing for 25 or more years are the most likely to receive none of their revenue from third-party payers.

Question #8 examined the percentage of practitioners who “considered” their office to be “100% ICD-10 compliant.” This question was asked just after the deadline for ICD-10 conversion, October 1, 2015. Only 60% of respondents believed they were 100% compliant, with 16% stating they weren’t and almost one-fourth (24%) unsure.

## CONCLUSION

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A little less than half (46%) of acupuncture practitioners say they will increase the products and services they sell and offer their patients this year. Forty-one percent of practitioners offer products and services to half or more of their patients.

A total of 69% of respondents indicated they are “thinking about” adding one or more products and/or services to their patients. More respondents are thinking about offering one or more services (63%) compared to those thinking about offering one or more products (45%).

Acupuncture practitioners indicated the top products they are thinking about adding to their practice include weight-loss products, anti-aging products, herbs-liquid, homeopathic remedies, and nutritional supplements. The top services practitioners are thinking about using in their practice are e-newsletter, practice management software, lab testing/services, laser services, weight-loss services and facial rejuvenation.

Colleagues, seminars, the Internet and trade publications are used most frequently to learn about new products and services. Practitioners with nine years or less of practice experience are much more likely to use social media to find information on new products and services.

Practitioners practicing for less than 25 years are more likely to be in integrated or interdisciplinary practices. Those practicing 25 years or more are more likely to be in broad-scope practices. The more years a practitioner has been in practice, the less likely they are to be in a multiple-practitioner practice.

A relatively small percentage of acupuncturists (16%) rely on third-party payers for most of their income. More than twice that (39%) don't receive any income from third-party payers. Sorting by length of time in practice shows a significant difference between those practicing for 20-24 years as opposed to the rest of the subgroups. Respondents practicing for 20-24 years are much more reliant on third-party payers, with 28% stating either “almost all” or “about 75%” coming from that source (10% and 18%, respectively).

The information in this survey should be used to better understand the anticipated short-term and projected long-term growth of products and services sold and used in today's acupuncture practices.

## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q1

Q1 In general, what is your future expectation about what you offer your patients?

### Answer Options

### Response Percent

Increasing products and services I offer my patients

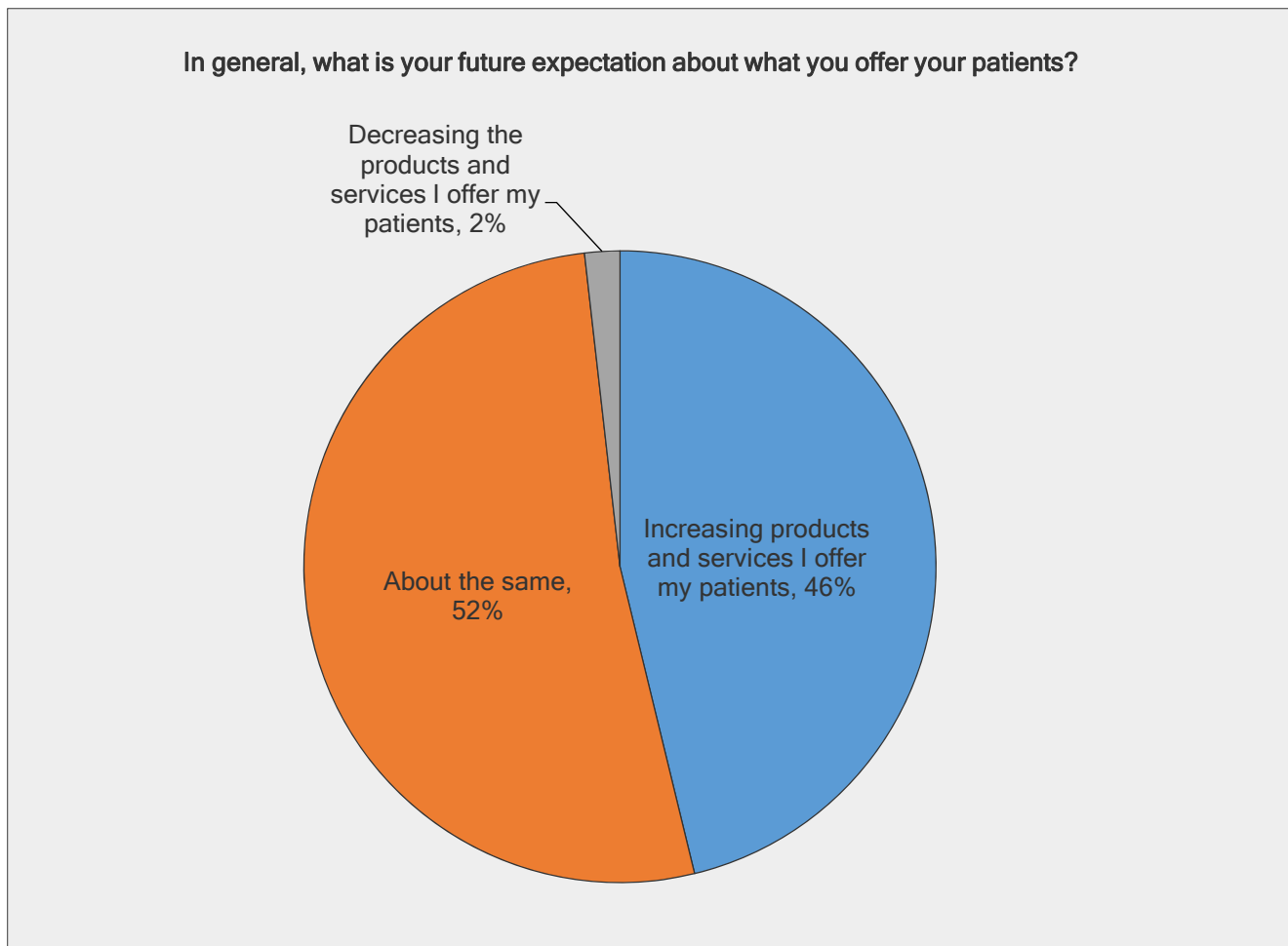
46%

About the same

52%

Decreasing the products and services I offer my patients

2%

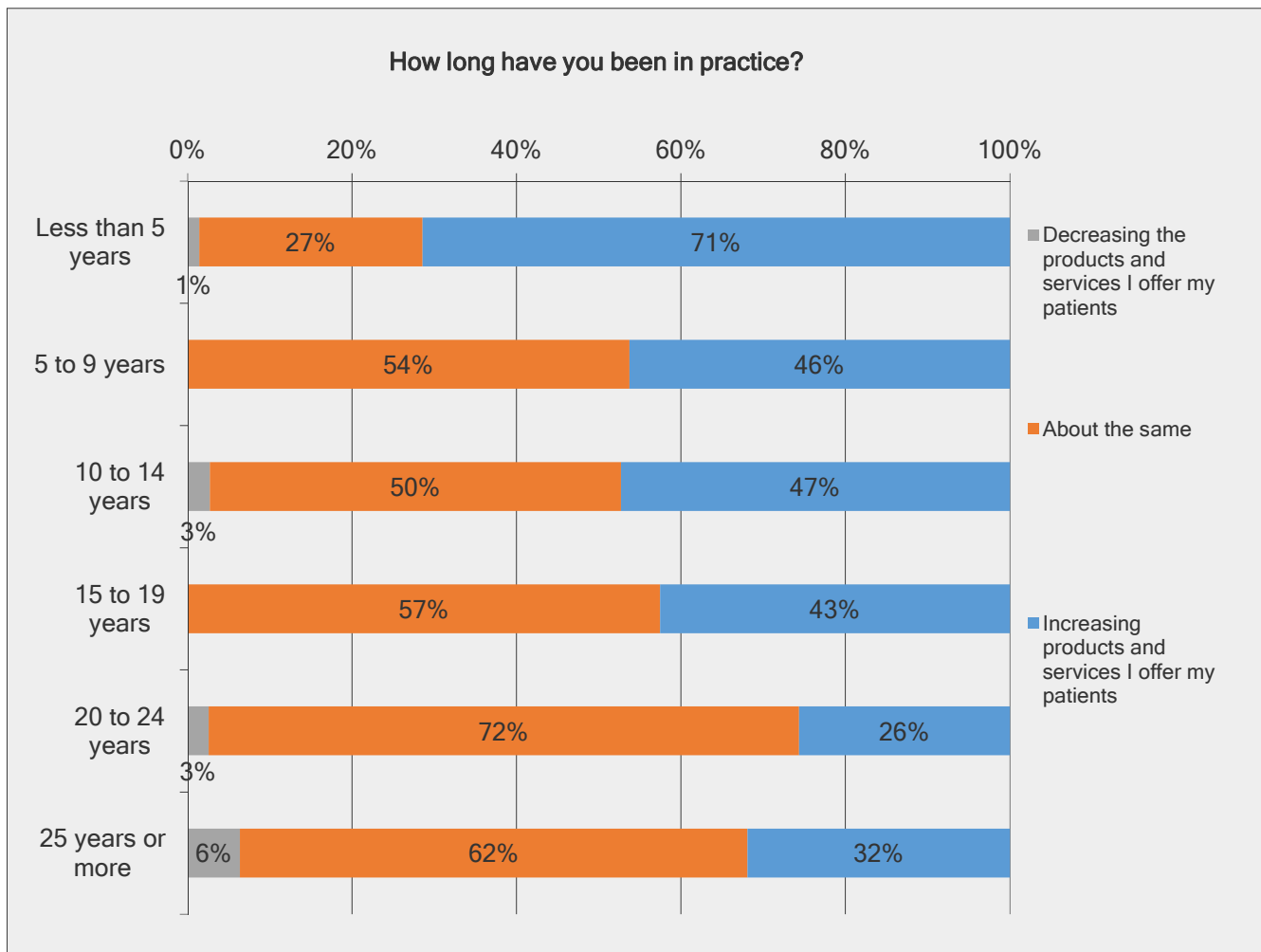


## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9-Q1

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Q1 In general, what is your future expectation about what you offer your patients?

Answer Options	Increasing products and services I offer my patients	About the same	Decreasing the products and services I offer my patients
Less than 5 years	71%	27%	1%
5 to 9 years	46%	54%	0%
10 to 14 years	47%	50%	3%
15 to 19 years	43%	57%	0%
20 to 24 years	26%	72%	3%
25 years or more	32%	62%	6%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q2

Q2 What percentage of your patients do you currently sell products to?

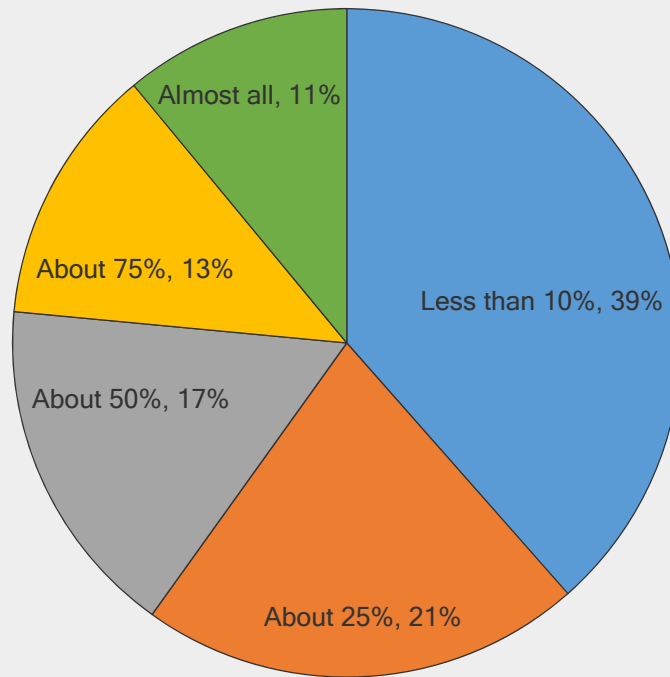
### Answer Options

Less than 10%  
About 25%  
About 50%  
About 75%  
Almost all

### Response Percent

39%  
21%  
17%  
13%  
11%

What percentage of your patients do you currently sell products to?



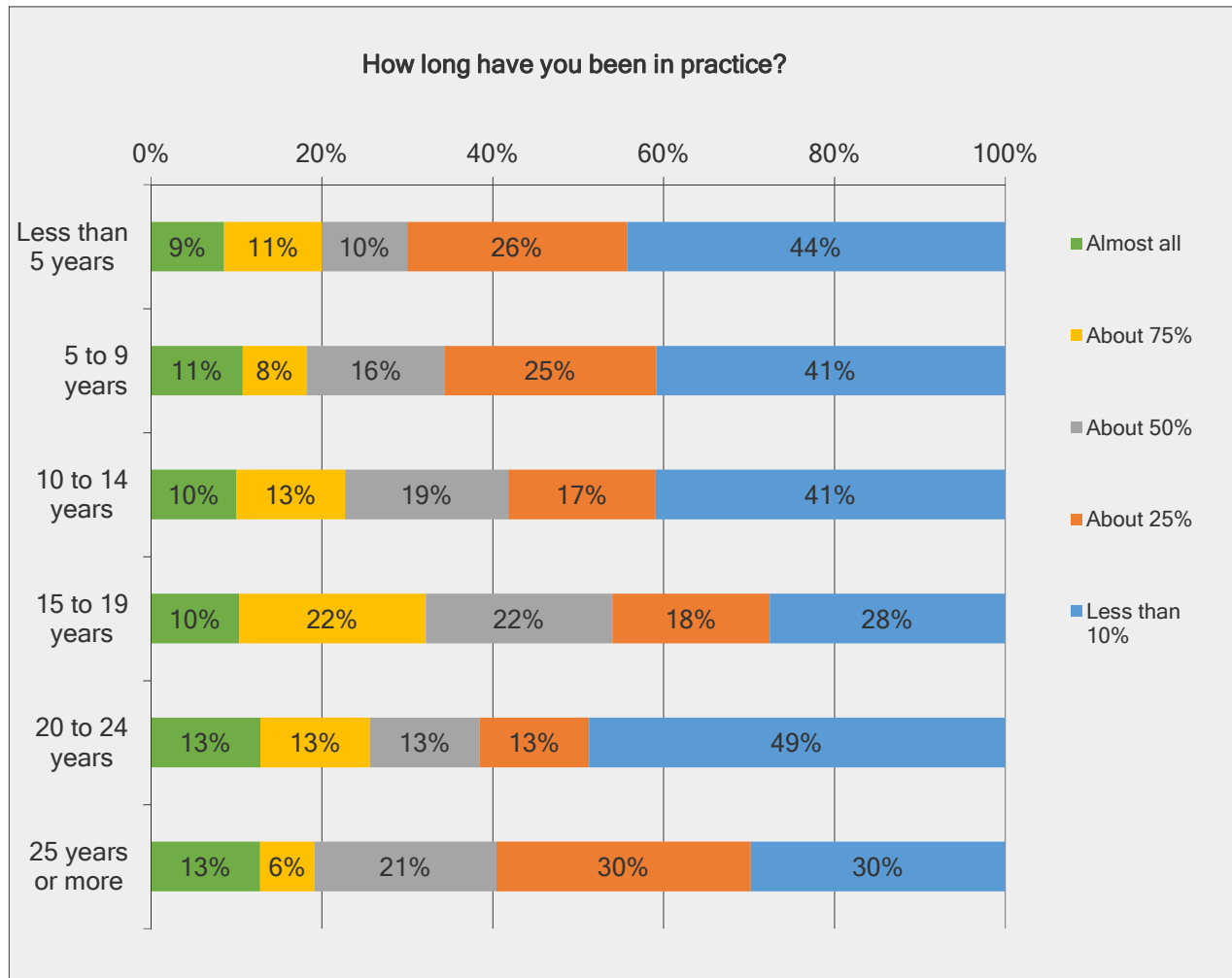


## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9-Q2

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Q2 What percentage of your patients do you currently sell products to?

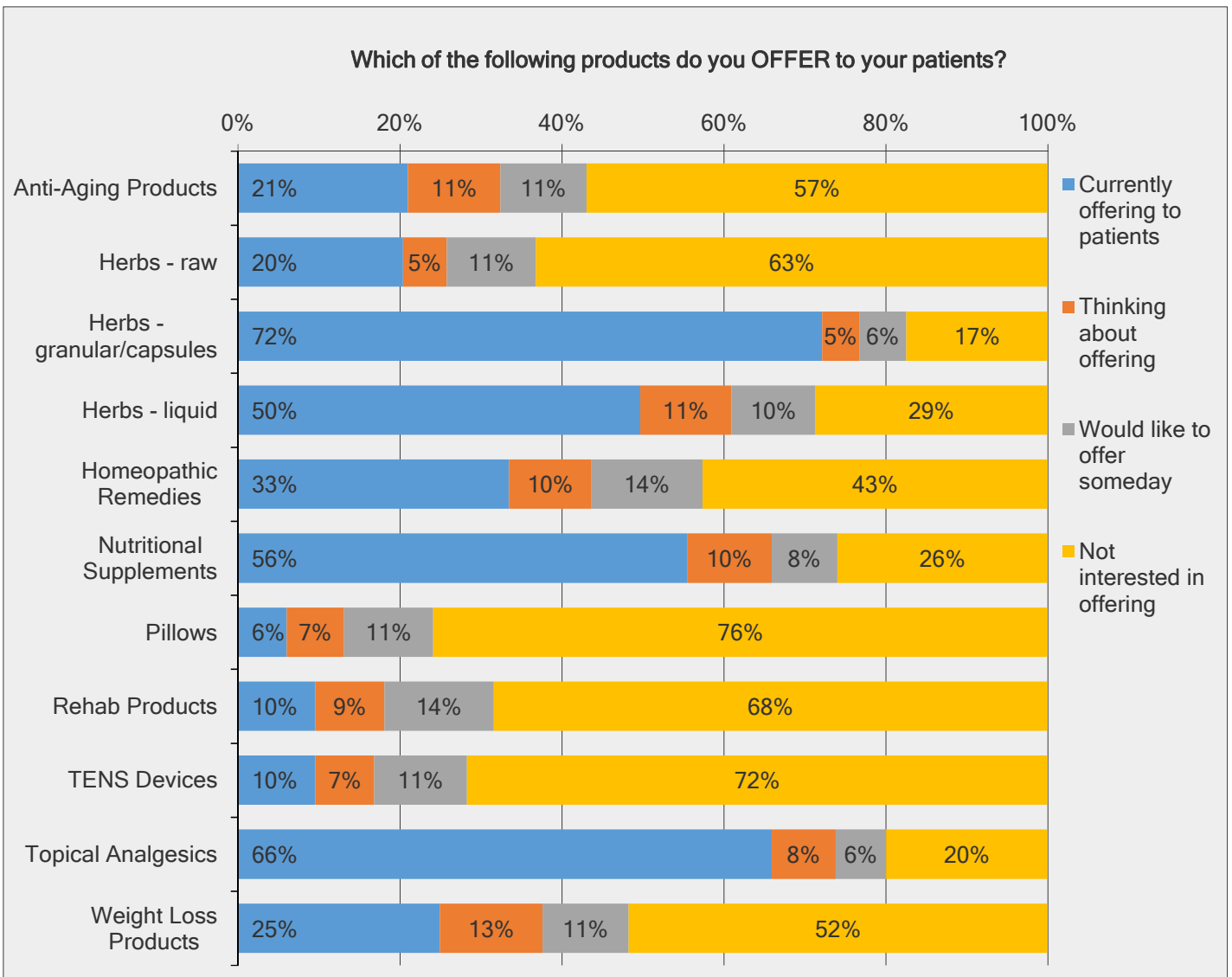
Answer Options	Less than 10%	About 25%	About 50%	About 75%	Almost all
Less than 5 years	44%	26%	10%	11%	9%
5 to 9 years	41%	25%	16%	8%	11%
10 to 14 years	41%	17%	19%	13%	10%
15 to 19 years	28%	18%	22%	22%	10%
20 to 24 years	49%	13%	13%	13%	13%
25 years or more	30%	30%	21%	6%	13%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q3

Q3 Which of the following products do you OFFER to your patients?

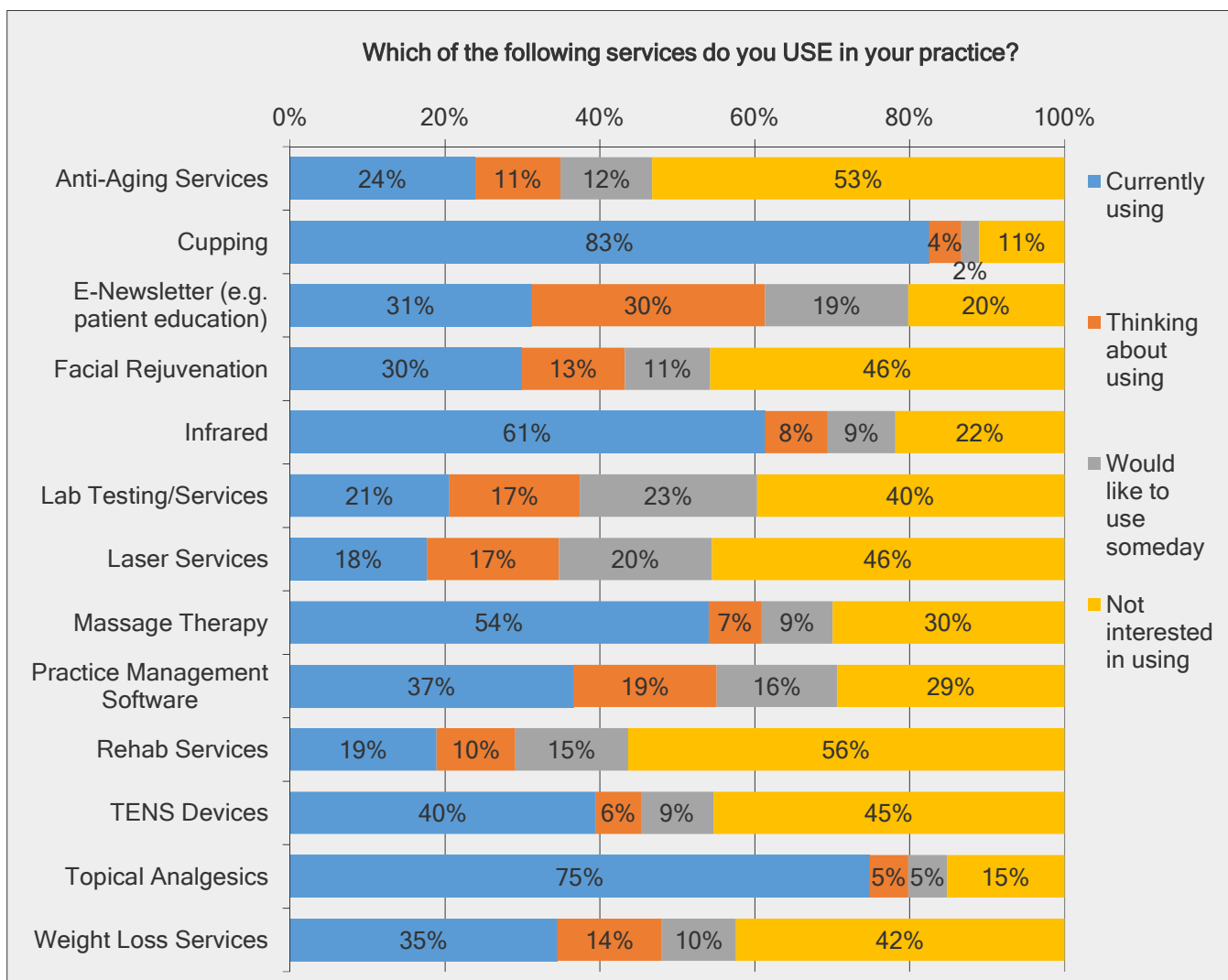
Answer Options	Currently offering to patients	Thinking about offering	Would like to offer someday	Not interested in offering
Anti-Aging Products	21%	11%	11%	57%
Herbs - raw	20%	5%	11%	63%
Herbs - granular/capsules	72%	5%	6%	17%
Herbs - liquid	50%	11%	10%	29%
Homeopathic Remedies	33%	10%	14%	43%
Nutritional Supplements	56%	10%	8%	26%
Pillows	6%	7%	11%	76%
Rehab Products	10%	9%	14%	68%
TENS Devices	10%	7%	11%	72%
Topical Analgesics	66%	8%	6%	20%
Weight Loss Products	25%	13%	11%	52%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q4

Q4 Which of the following services do you USE in your practice?

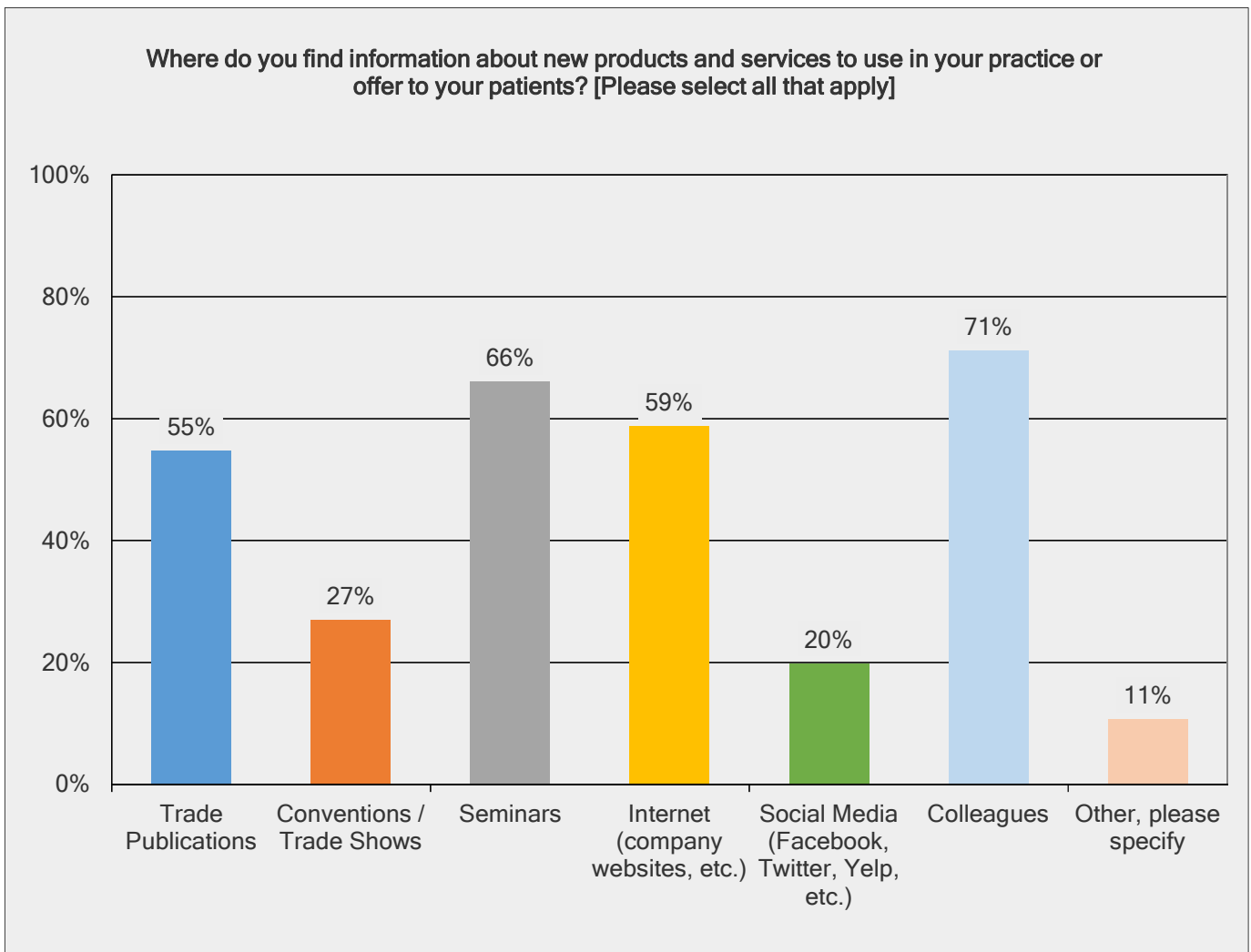
Answer Options	Currently using	Thinking about using	Would like to use someday	Not interested in using
Anti-Aging Services	24%	11%	12%	53%
Cupping	83%	4%	2%	11%
E-Newsletter (e.g. patient education)	31%	30%	19%	20%
Facial Rejuvenation	30%	13%	11%	46%
Infrared	61%	8%	9%	22%
Lab Testing/Services	21%	17%	23%	40%
Laser Services	18%	17%	20%	46%
Massage Therapy	54%	7%	9%	30%
Practice Management Software	37%	19%	16%	29%
Rehab Services	19%	10%	15%	56%
TENS Devices	40%	6%	9%	45%
Topical Analgesics	75%	5%	5%	15%
Weight Loss Services	35%	14%	10%	42%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q5

Q5 Where do you find information about new products and services to use in your practice or offer to your patients? [Please select all that apply]

Answer Options	Response Percent
Trade Publications	55%
Conventions / Trade Shows	27%
Seminars	66%
Internet (company websites, etc.)	59%
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, etc.)	20%
Colleagues	71%
Other, please specify	11%

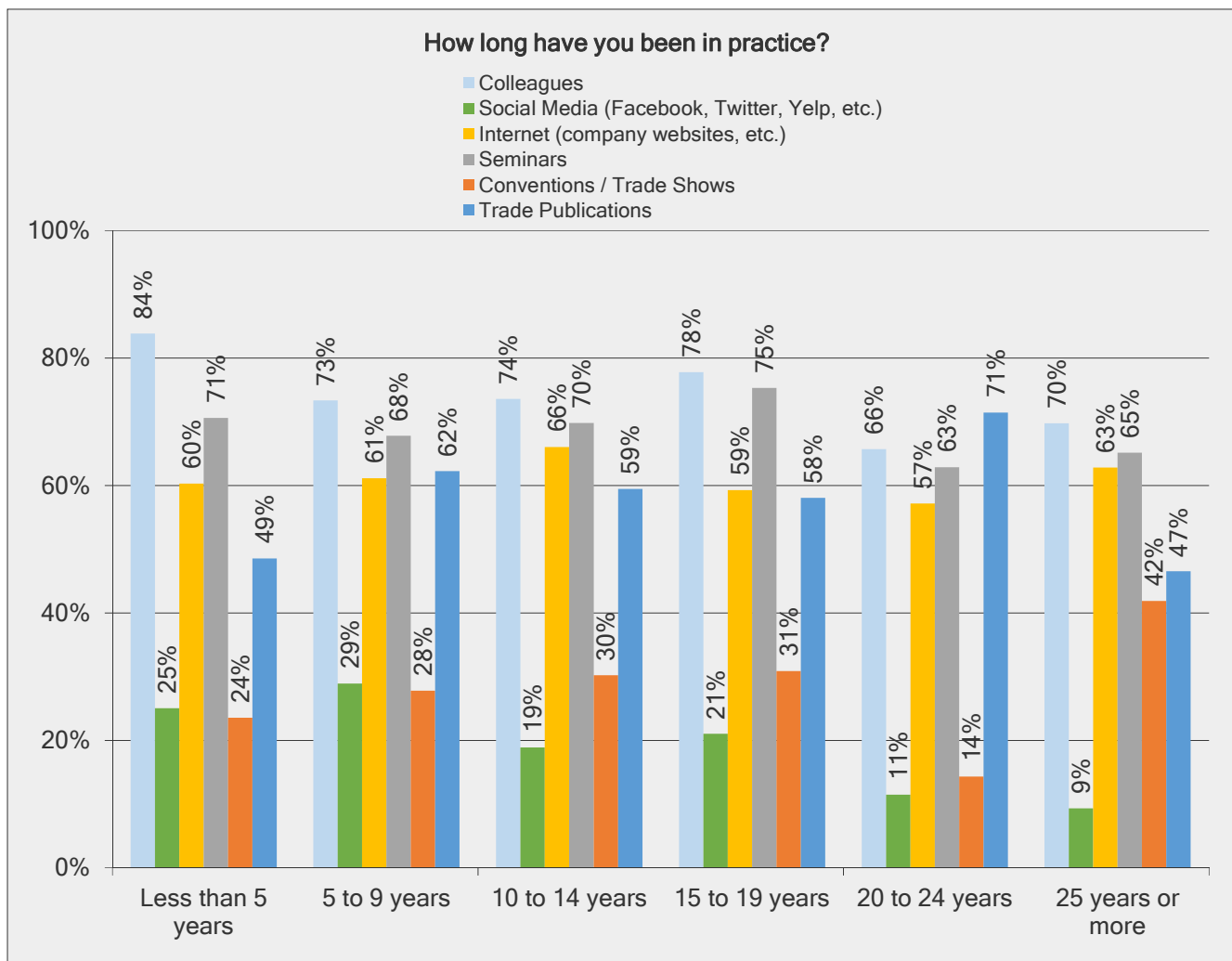


## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9-Q5

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Q5 Where do you find information about new products and services to use in your practice or offer to your patients? [Please select all that apply]

Answer Options	Trade Publications	Conventions / Trade Shows	Seminars	Internet (company websites, etc.)	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, etc.)	Colleagues
Less than 5 years	49%	24%	71%	60%	25%	84%
5 to 9 years	62%	28%	68%	61%	29%	73%
10 to 14 years	59%	30%	70%	66%	19%	74%
15 to 19 years	58%	31%	75%	59%	21%	78%
20 to 24 years	71%	14%	63%	57%	11%	66%
25 years or more	47%	42%	65%	63%	9%	70%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q6

Q6 Which of the following best describes your practice:

### Answer Options

### Response Percent

**Single Practitioner, Traditional** - 90% or more of your revenue from acupuncture/herbs



**Single Practitioner, Broad Scope** - 20% or more of your revenue from something other than acupuncture/herbs



**Multiple Practitioner, Traditional** - more than one acupuncture/herb practitioners in the office, 90% or more of your revenue from acupuncture/herbs



**Multiple Practitioners, Broad Scope** - more than one acupuncture/herb practitioners in the office, 20% or more of your revenue from something other than acupuncture/herbs



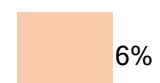
**Specialized Practice** - more than 50% of your revenue from something other than acupuncture/herbs



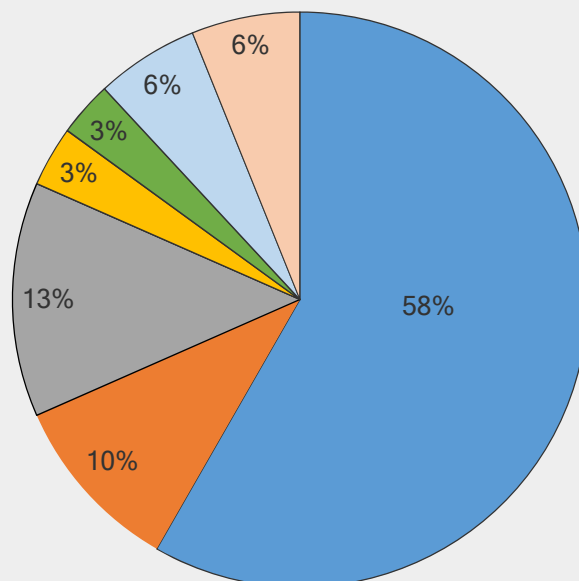
**Interdisciplinary Practice** - practicing with at least two other non- acupuncture/herb professionals (not including massage therapists) where some expenses are shared



**Integrated Interdisciplinary Practice** - practicing with at least two other non- acupuncture/herb professionals (not including massage therapists) where providers work as a team to address the needs of almost all patients and some expenses are shared



Which of the following best describes your practice:

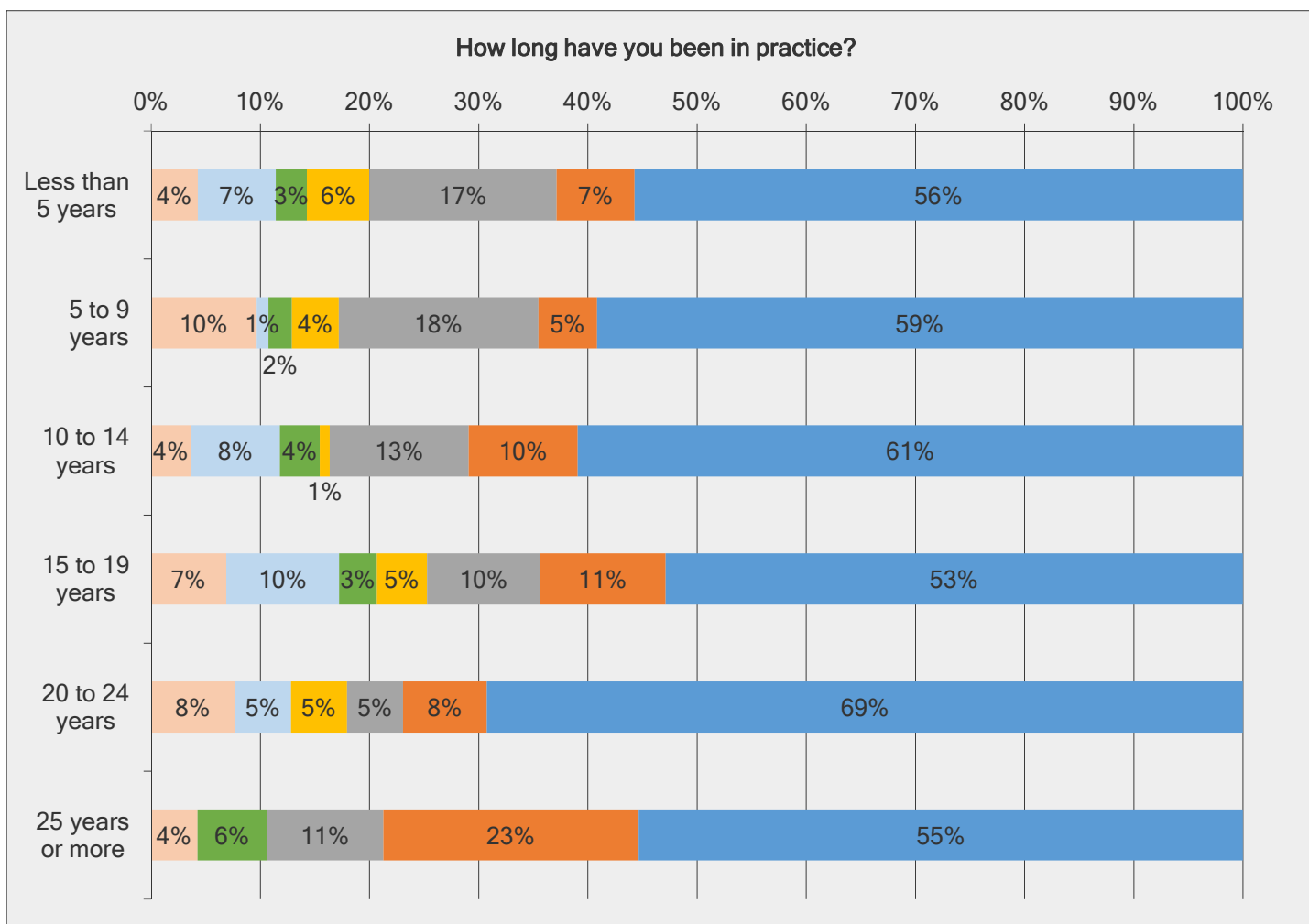


## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9-Q6

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Q6 Which of the following best describes your practice:

Answer Options	Single Practitioner Traditional	Single Practitioner Broad Scope	Multiple Practitioner Traditional	Multiple Practitioner Broad Scope	Specialized Practice	Inter-disciplinary Practice	Integrated Inter-disciplinary Practice
Less than 5 years	56%	7%	17%	6%	3%	7%	4%
5 to 9 years	59%	5%	18%	4%	2%	1%	10%
10 to 14 years	61%	10%	13%	1%	4%	8%	4%
15 to 19 years	53%	11%	10%	5%	3%	10%	7%
20 to 24 years	69%	8%	5%	5%	0%	5%	8%
25 years or more	55%	23%	11%	0%	6%	0%	4%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q7

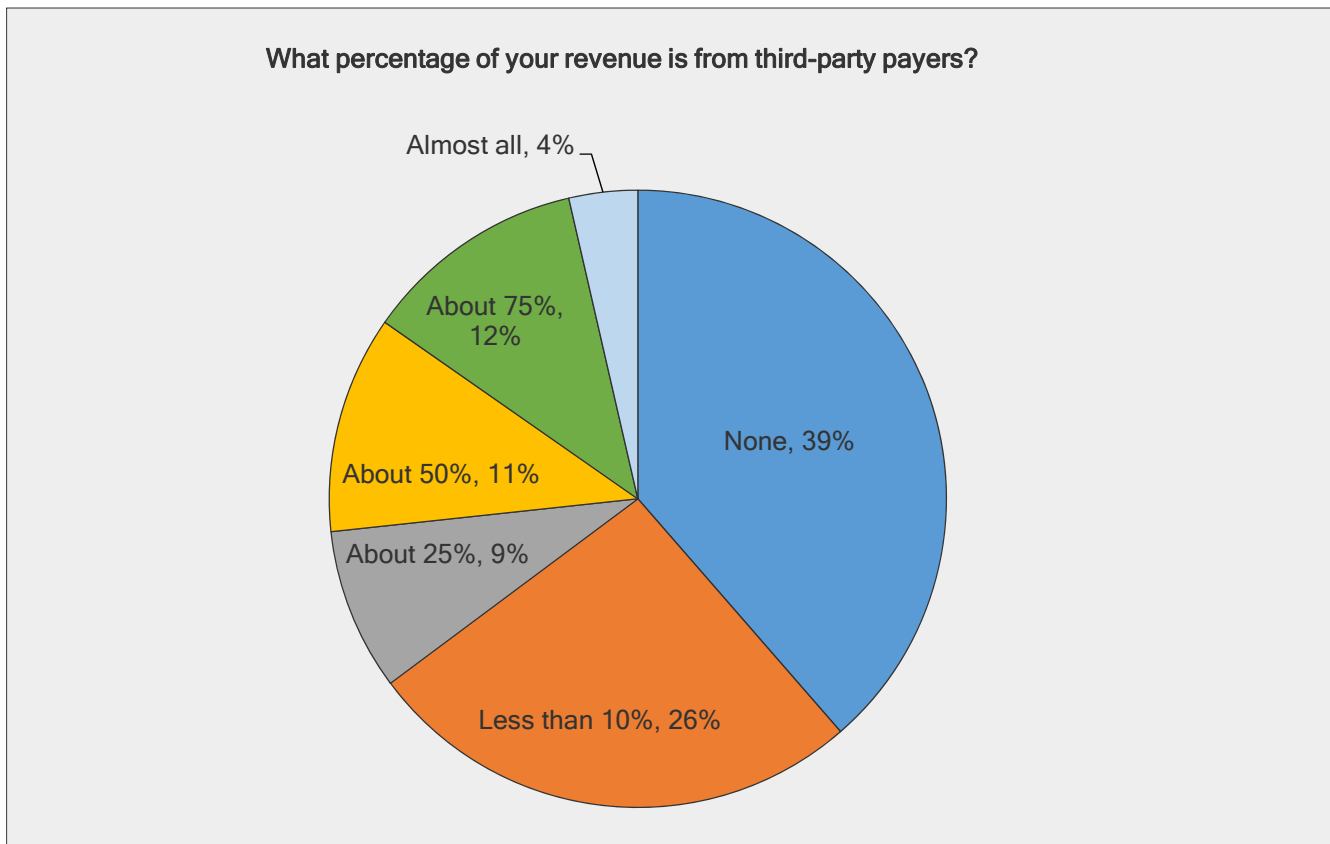
Q7 What percentage of your revenue is from third-party payers?

### Answer Options

None  
Less than 10%  
About 25%  
About 50%  
About 75%  
Almost all

### Response Percent

39%  
26%  
9%  
11%  
12%  
4%



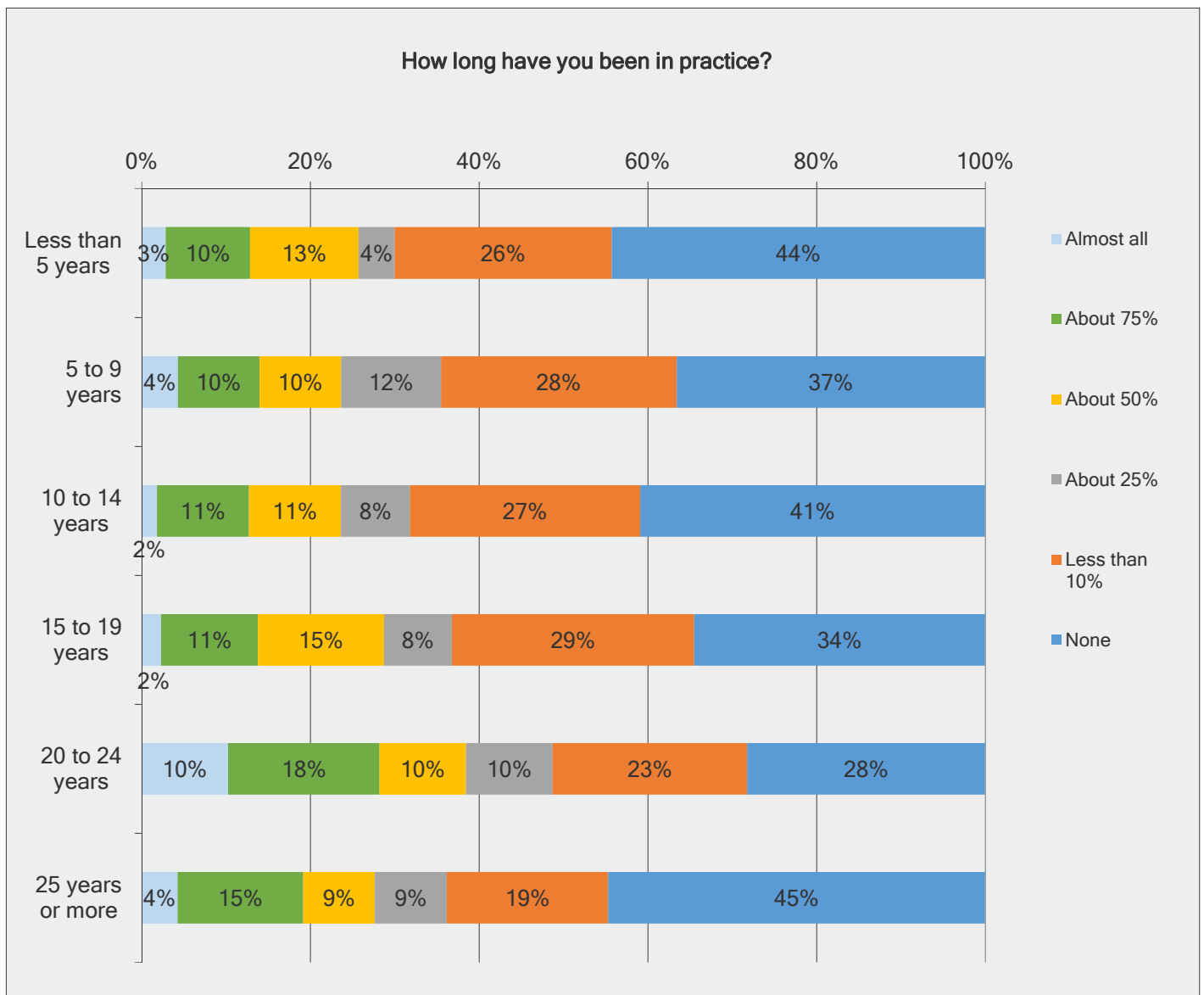


## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9-Q7

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Q7 What percentage of your revenue is from third-party payers?

Answer Options	None	Less than 10%	About 25%	About 50%	About 75%	Almost all
Less than 5 years	44%	26%	4%	13%	10%	3%
5 to 9 years	37%	28%	12%	10%	10%	4%
10 to 14 years	41%	27%	8%	11%	11%	2%
15 to 19 years	34%	29%	8%	15%	11%	2%
20 to 24 years	28%	23%	10%	10%	18%	10%
25 years or more	45%	19%	9%	9%	15%	4%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q8

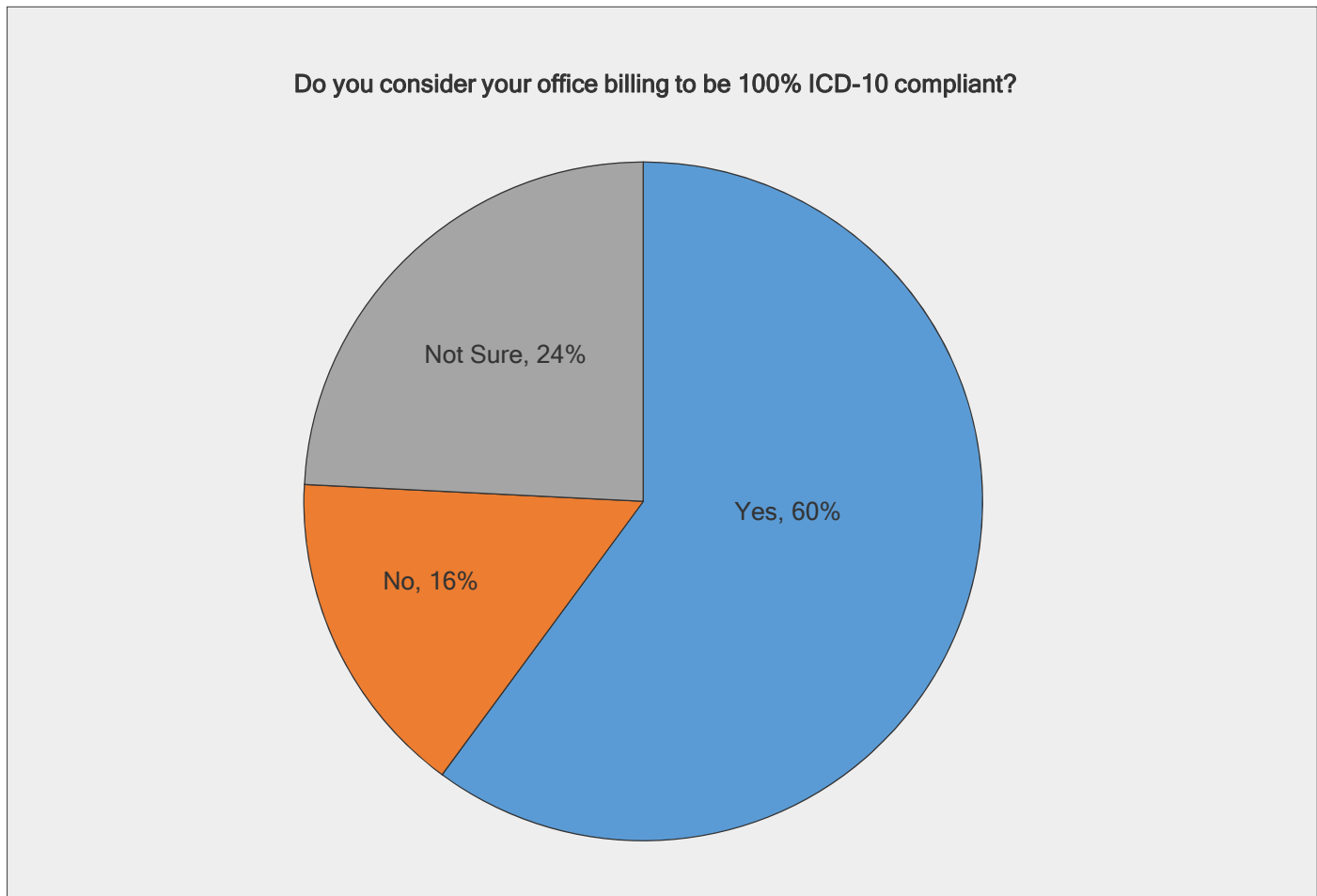
Q8 Do you consider your office billing to be 100% ICD-10 compliant?

**Answer Options**

Yes  
No  
Not Sure

**Response Percent**

60%  
16%  
24%



## The Expanding Acupuncture Practice Q9

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

### Answer Options

Less than 5 years  
5 to 9 years  
10 to 14 years  
15 to 19 years  
20 to 24 years  
25 years or more

### Response Percent

16%  
21%  
25%  
20%  
9%  
11%

