

Acupuncture Today's
Expanding Acupuncture Practice Survey

Executive Summary

November 2018

A RESEARCH REPORT BY



METHODOLOGY

This survey was initiated on **November 6, 2018** by MPA Media, publishers of *Acupuncture Today*, *Dynamic Chiropractic*, and *Dynamic Chiropractic Practice Insights*. The survey was sent to **33,516** acupuncturists via email. The response rate was **1.2 %**

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

DISCUSSION

This survey was designed to help establish the opinions of acupuncturists in relation to the products and services they currently use/sell and are looking to use/sell as they expand their practices. It also examines the media they depend on for new information and new patients. Many of the responses can be compared to a similar survey conducted in October 2015.

The first question asks, “What percentage of your patients do you currently offer products to?” Twenty-five percent of respondents stated that they offer products to “almost all” of their patients. This was followed by 10% who offer products to three-quarters of their patients, 16% who offer products to half of their patients, 18% who offer products to a quarter of their patients, and 31% who offer products to “less than 10%” of their patients.

In total, 51% of respondents are offering products to half or more of their patients, This response shows considerable growth compared to the 2015 survey results, in which 41% of DCs reported offering products to at least half of their patients and only 11% reported offering products to almost all of their patients compared to 25% in 2018.

The second question asks, “what is your future expectation about what you offer to your patients?” Over half (56%) expect to offer “about the same” products and services to their patients, with 41% expecting to increase the products and services they offer and 3% expecting to decrease.

The next question asks which product lines acupuncturists offer to their patients? The leaders are herbs - any (74%), topical analgesics (69%), herbs – granular/capsules (68%) and nutritional supplements (58%). Another metric from Question 2 is the doctors who are “thinking about offering” different products. In this case, the leaders are CBD products (26% thinking about offering), weight-loss products (12%), anti-aging products (12%) and nutritional supplements (12%).

Question #4 similarly asked, “Which of the following services do you use in your practice?” The leaders are: cupping (86%), topical analgesics (73%) and infrared (65%). The top services acupuncturists are thinking about using are: patient e-newsletters (23%), lab testing (14%) and laser (14%).

In responding to Question #5, most acupuncturists get their acupuncture news and information from

Seminars (79%), trade digital publications (63%) and colleagues (62%). Interestingly enough, more acupuncturists get their professional news and information from digital trade publications than from print trade publications (63% v. 59%).

On a similar note, Question #6 asked, “Where do you find information about new products and services to use in your practice or offer to your patients?” Seminars are the top choice for almost three quarters of the profession (72%), followed by colleagues (64%), Internet (63%) and trade digital publications (52%). Again, digital trade publications lead print trade publications 52% v. 46%.

In Question #7, a selection of practice models are provided in an effort to understand which model doctors most closely identify with. Most doctors are still practicing in a traditional acupuncture/herb practice (71% combined) in which 90% or more of their revenue comes from acupuncture/herbs in either a single-doctor office (62%) or a multiple-doctor office (9%). Eighteen percent of doctors practice with a broader scope: 20% or more of their revenue comes from something other than acupuncture/herbs either in a single-doctor office (13%) or a multi-doctor office (5%). Specialized practices (3%), interdisciplinary practices (4%) and integrated interdisciplinary practices (4%) make up the rest of the models. Single-doctor practices constitute three-quarters of the total.

The next question looks at the percentage of revenue from third-party payers. Fifty-nine percent of acupuncturists responded that their third-party reimbursement is less than 10% (18%) or none (41%). This was followed by 11% who receive a quarter of their revenue from third-party payers, 17% who receive half, 9% who receive three-quarters and 4% who receive almost all revenue from third-party reimbursement.

The final question asked about doctors’ number of years in practice. The largest percentage (23%) of doctors have been practicing for 15-19 years. The remaining segments are fairly evenly spread except for doctors practicing less than 5 years at only 9%.

CONCLUSION

Over half of all acupuncturists (51%) are offering products to half or more of their patients compared with 41% three years ago. This is a significant jump compared to the 2015 survey results. In addition, 41% of doctors are expecting to increase the products and services they offer. It is likely that the percentage of patients offered products will continue to rise in the near term.

The top products lines offered to patients as of 2018 are: herbs - any (74%), topical analgesics (69%), herbs – granular/capsules (68%) and nutritional supplements (58%). CBD products are now the leading product doctors are “thinking about offering” their patients with over a quarter of acupuncturists (26%) considering this product line. Weight-loss products (12%), anti-aging products (12%) and nutritional supplements (12%) follow.

Cupping (86%), topical analgesics (73%) and infrared (65%) lead as the top services acupuncturists are using in their practices. The leaders that doctors are thinking about using are: patient e-newsletters (23%), lab testing (14%) and laser (14%).

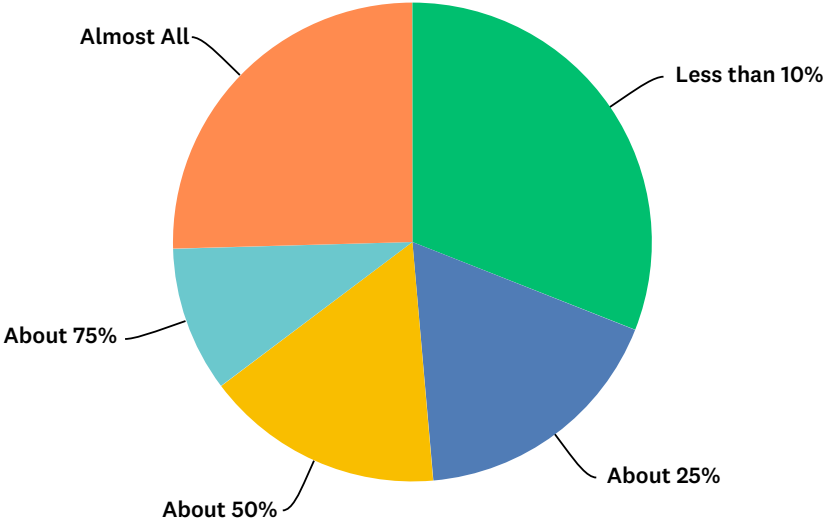
Digital trade publications have overtaken print trade publications as acupuncturists are increasing going digital. This is true for both news/information as well as for information on new products and services.

Most acupuncturists have little to no reliance on third-party payers with reimbursement at less than 10% of their revenue (18%) or none (41%). More than three-quarters (77%) of doctors receive half or less of their income from third-party payers.

The acupuncture profession is changing in a number of ways. Most pronounced are the additional products and services being offer to patients and the increasing percentage of patients these products and services are offered to A similar study should be conducted three years from now to see if these trends continue.

Q1 What percentage of your patients do you currently offer products to?

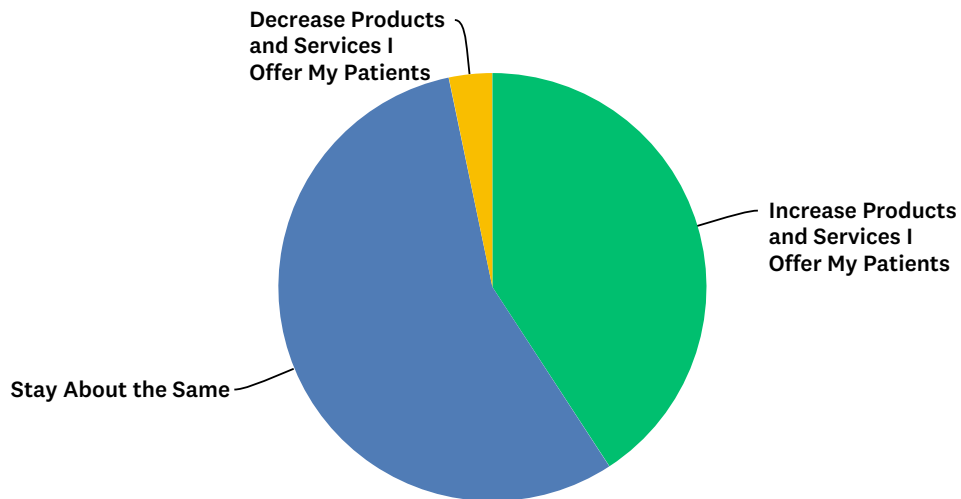
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 10%	31%	123
About 25%	18%	70
About 50%	16%	64
About 75%	10%	39
Almost All	25%	101
TOTAL		397

Q2 In general, what is your future expectation about what you offer your patients?

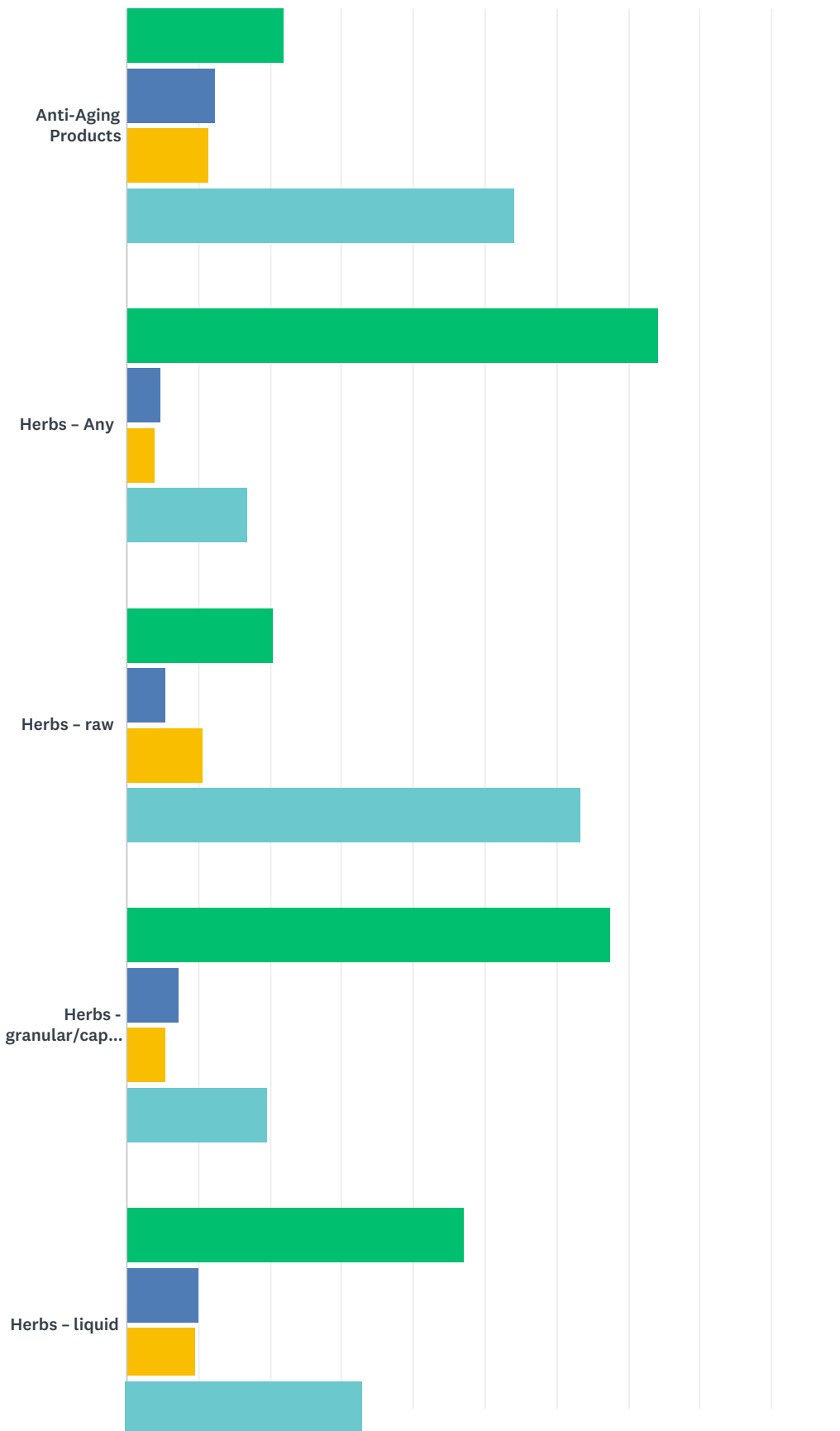
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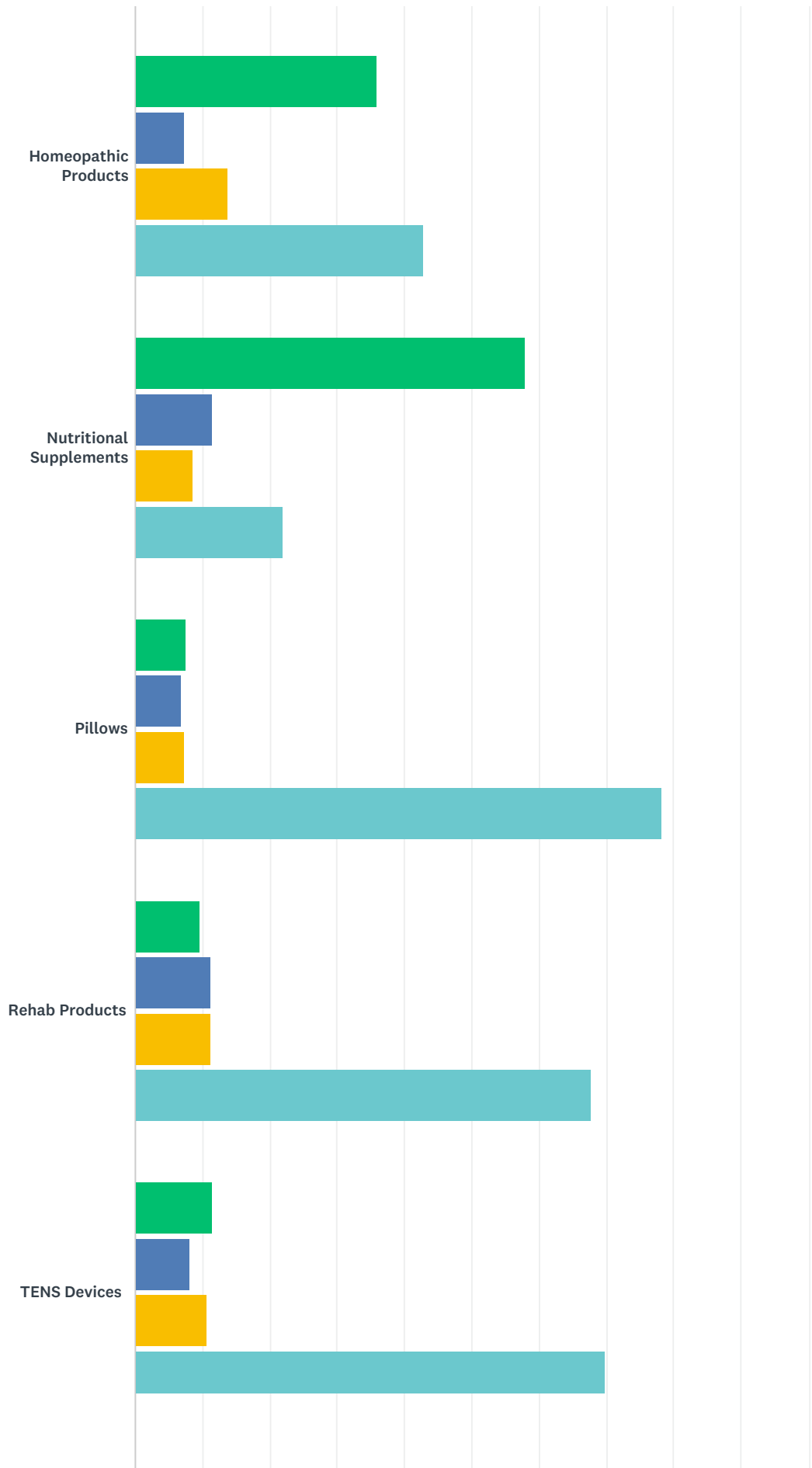


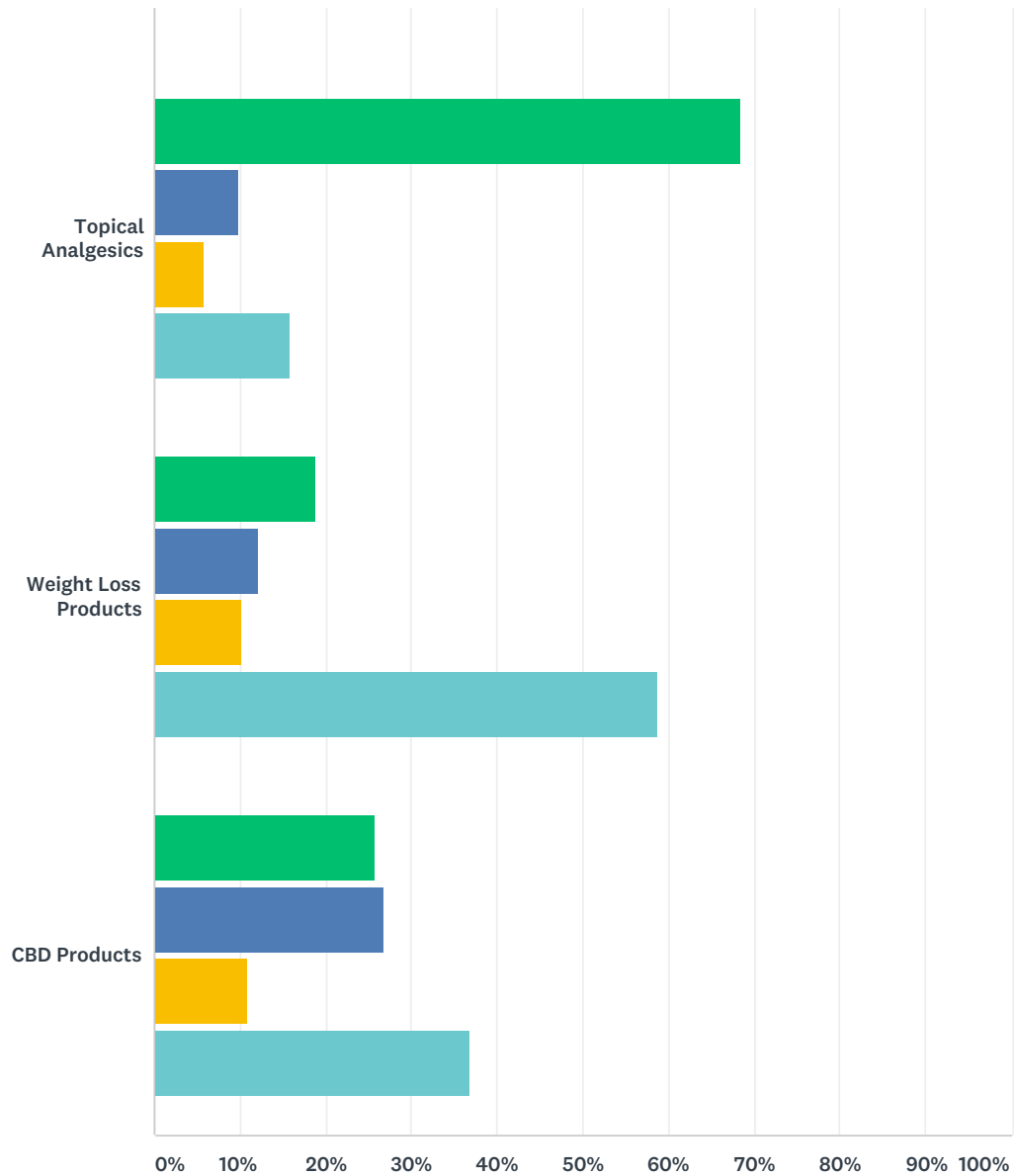
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase Products and Services I Offer My Patients	41%	162
Stay About the Same	56%	222
Decrease Products and Services I Offer My Patients	3%	13
TOTAL		397

Q3 Which of the following PRODUCTS do you offer to your patients?

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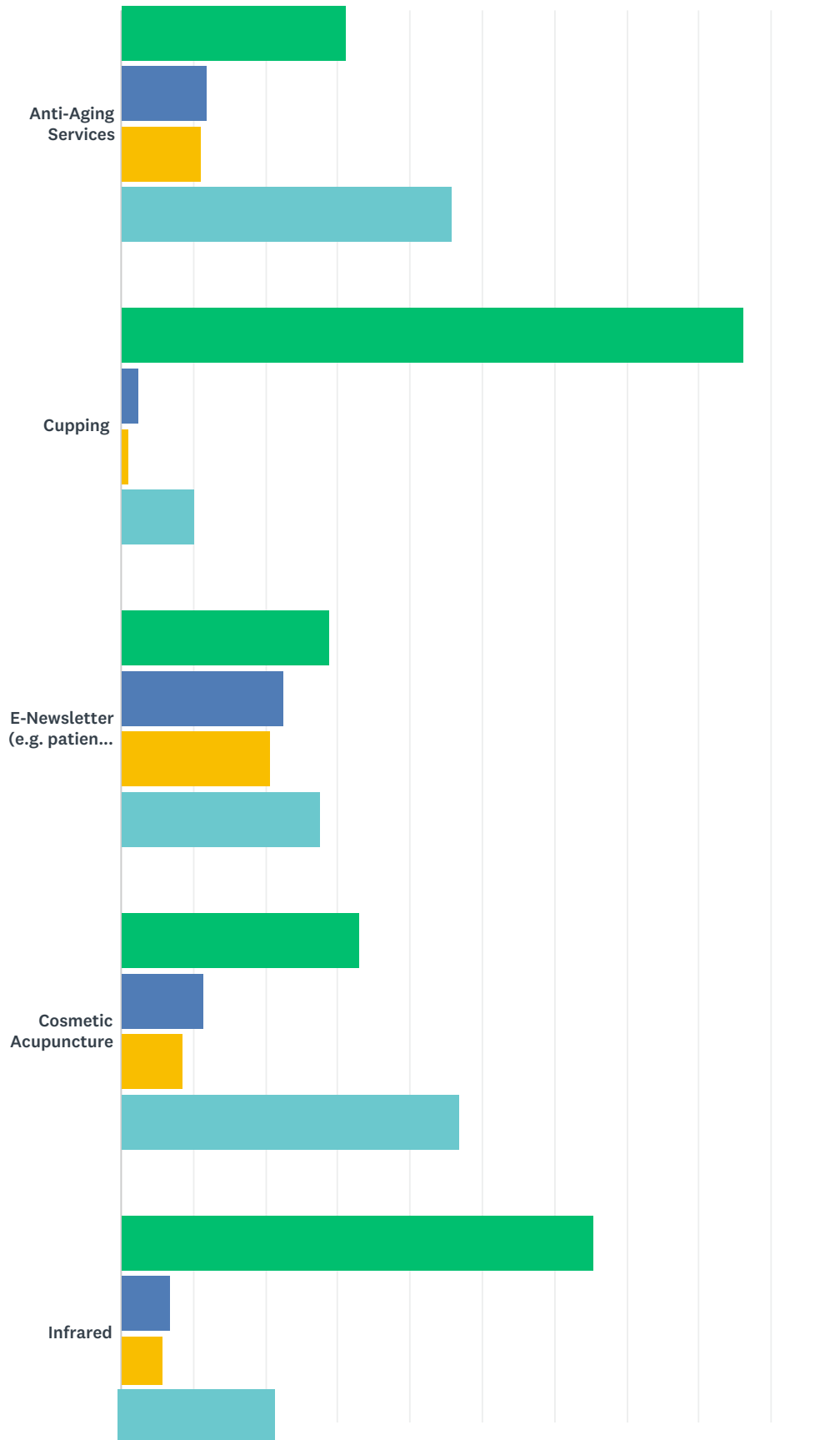
■ Currently Offering to Patients ■ Thinking about Offering
■ Would Like to Offer Someday ■ Not Interested in Offering

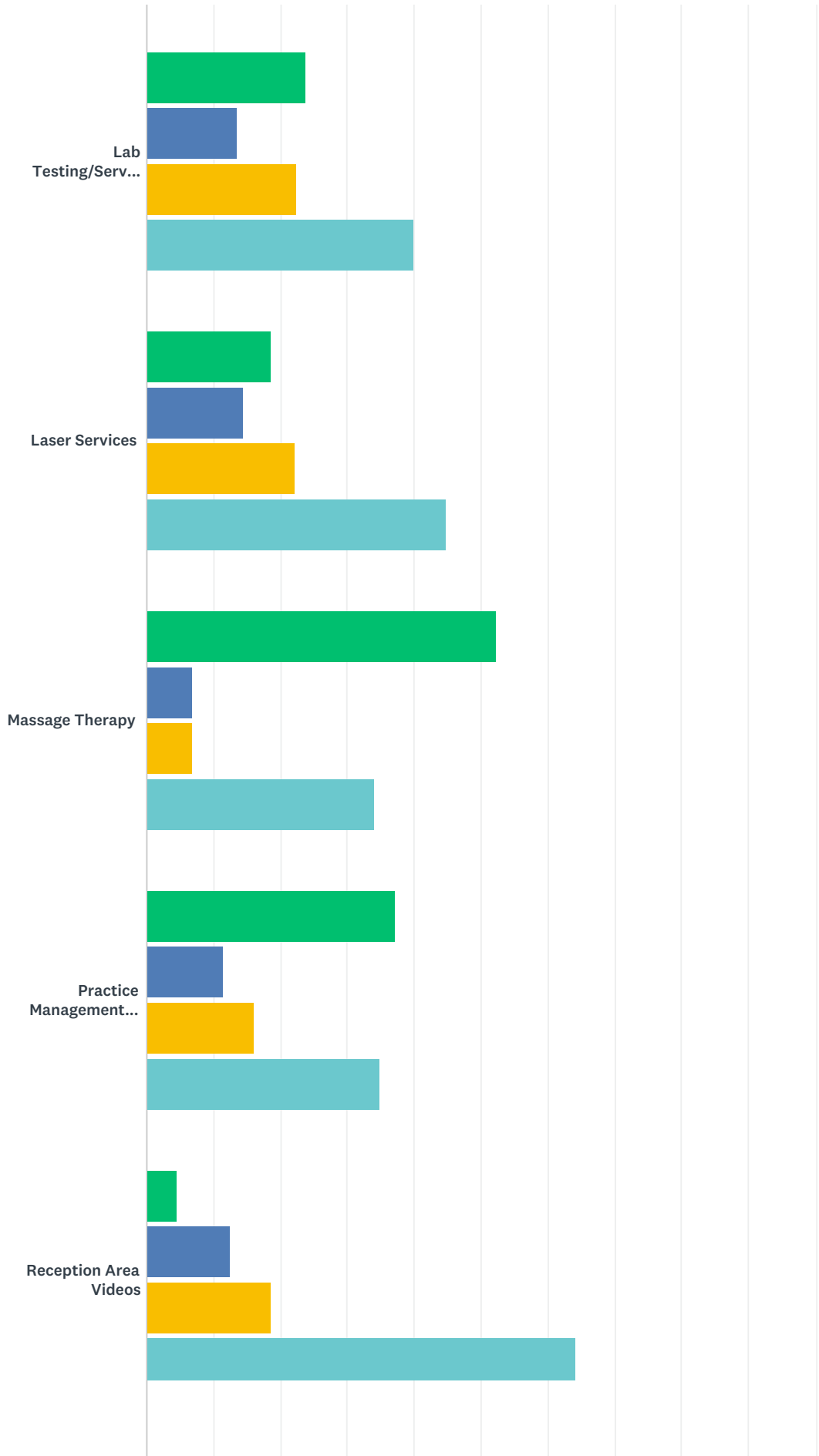
	CURRENTLY OFFERING TO PATIENTS	THINKING ABOUT OFFERING	WOULD LIKE TO OFFER SOMEDAY	NOT INTERESTED IN OFFERING	TOTAL
Anti-Aging Products	22% 87	12% 49	12% 46	54% 215	397
Herbs – Any	74% 295	5% 19	4% 16	17% 67	397
Herbs – raw	20% 81	6% 22	11% 42	63% 252	397
Herbs - granular/capsules	68% 268	7% 29	6% 22	20% 78	397
Herbs – liquid	47% 187	10% 40	10% 38	33% 132	397

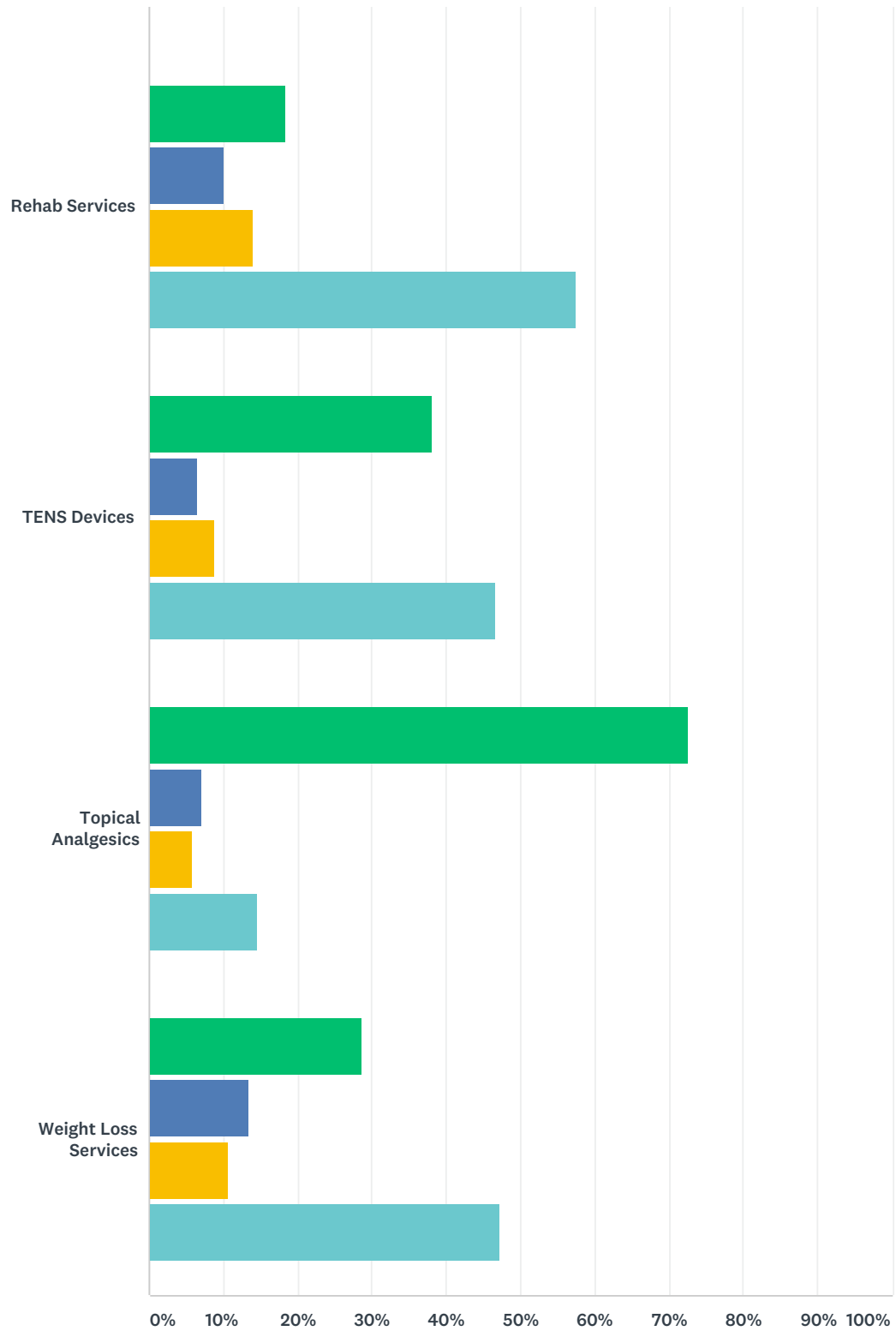
Homeopathic Products	36% 143	7% 29	14% 55	43% 170	397
Nutritional Supplements	58% 230	12% 46	9% 34	22% 87	397
Pillows	8% 30	7% 27	7% 29	78% 311	397
Rehab Products	10% 38	11% 45	11% 45	68% 269	397
TENS Devices	12% 46	8% 32	11% 42	70% 277	397
Topical Analgesics	69% 272	10% 39	6% 23	16% 63	397
Weight Loss Products	19% 75	12% 48	10% 41	59% 233	397
CBD Products	26% 102	27% 106	11% 43	37% 146	397

Q4 Which of the following SERVICES do you use in your practice?

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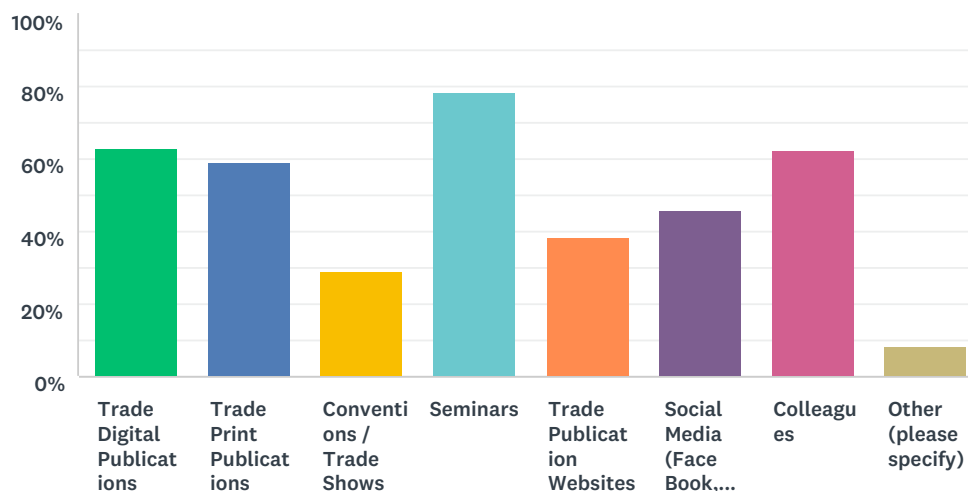


■ Currently Using
 ■ Thinking about Using
 ■ Would Like to Use Someday
 ■ Not Interested in Using

	CURRENTLY USING	THINKING ABOUT USING	WOULD LIKE TO USE SOMEDAY	NOT INTERESTED IN USING	TOTAL
Anti-Aging Services	31% 124	12% 47	11% 44	46% 182	397
Cupping	86% 342	3% 10	1% 4	10% 41	397
E-Newsletter (e.g. patient education)	29% 115	23% 90	21% 82	28% 110	397
Cosmetic Acupuncture	33% 131	12% 46	9% 34	47% 186	397
Infrared	65% 260	7% 27	6% 23	22% 87	397
Lab Testing/Services	24% 95	14% 54	22% 89	40% 159	397
Laser Services	19% 74	14% 57	22% 88	45% 178	397
Massage Therapy	52% 208	7% 27	7% 27	34% 135	397
Practice Management Software	37% 148	12% 46	16% 64	35% 139	397
Reception Area Videos	5% 18	13% 50	19% 74	64% 255	397
Rehab Services	18% 73	10% 40	14% 56	57% 228	397
TENS Devices	38% 151	7% 26	9% 35	47% 185	397
Topical Analgesics	73% 288	7% 28	6% 23	15% 58	397
Weight Loss Services	29% 114	13% 53	11% 42	47% 188	397

Q5 What media sources do you use to get acupuncture news and information? [please select as many as apply]

Answered: 397 Skipped: 0



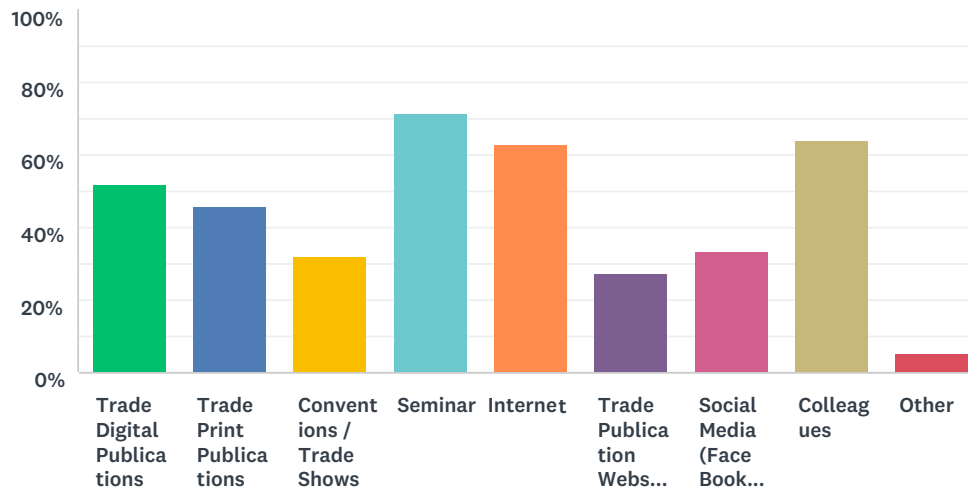
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Trade Digital Publications	63% 251
Trade Print Publications	59% 235
Conventions / Trade Shows	29% 116
Seminars	79% 312
Trade Publication Websites	38% 152
Social Media (Face Book, Twitter, etc.)	46% 183
Colleagues	62% 248
Other (please specify)	8% 33
Total Respondents: 397	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
1	Webinars
2	patients referral
3	conferences in Euurope and Daosit Temple China
4	podcasts and online webinars
5	books, webinars,
6	Webinars
7	acupuncture today is a great source
8	School/Alumni
9	on line courses
10	ASA, NCCAOM
11	None

12	no comment
13	newspapers
14	Lotus very helpful in CEU's and the most recommended. AcupunctureToday.com or printed paper nice but articles too basic without a lot of information or proven research. Case studies low on the totem pole. That said, the latter is great resource for laypeople interested in the basics.
15	Word of mouth
16	John Weeks' blog, CAM scientific journals, NCCAOM email
17	Other health publications
18	None. Most acupuncturists are poorly educated
19	Email from suppliers; CEU Course Notices
20	What ever I get in paper form by mail. Not e-mail.
21	Research
22	you
23	Jeffrey Yuen's courses
24	Acupuncture Today
25	currently a PCOM DAC student - school info
26	Doctor referral
27	websites
28	State Association News Emails
29	Research
30	webinars
31	Direct participation with State and National Association
32	medical research
33	constant contact

Q6 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]

Answered: 397 Skipped: 0



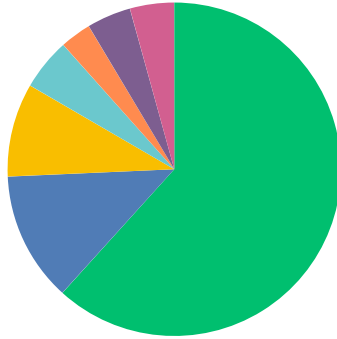
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Trade Digital Publications	52% 207
Trade Print Publications	46% 183
Conventions / Trade Shows	32% 127
Seminars	72% 284
Internet (company websites, etc.)	63% 251
Trade Publication Websites	28% 110
Social Media (Face Book, Twitter, Yelp, etc.)	34% 133
Colleagues	64% 255
Other (please specify)	6% 22
Total Respondents: 397	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
1	Herb suppliers
2	Webinars
3	Europe conferences and colleagues ever since 2013 recall of Chlpramphenicol
4	we used enough products in China. What did we use now we use
5	pod casts,
6	Webinars
7	My acupuncturist
8	My product supplier
9	no comment
10	Elotus and Acupuncturetoday.com—both very good for these things.

11	Medical journals
12	Patients
13	web search
14	none
15	Google
16	China travels
17	internet webinars
18	Sales representative
19	Golden Flower Chinese Herbs
20	medical research
21	Emerson
22	Companies I'm currently purchasing from

Q7 Which of the following best describes your practice?

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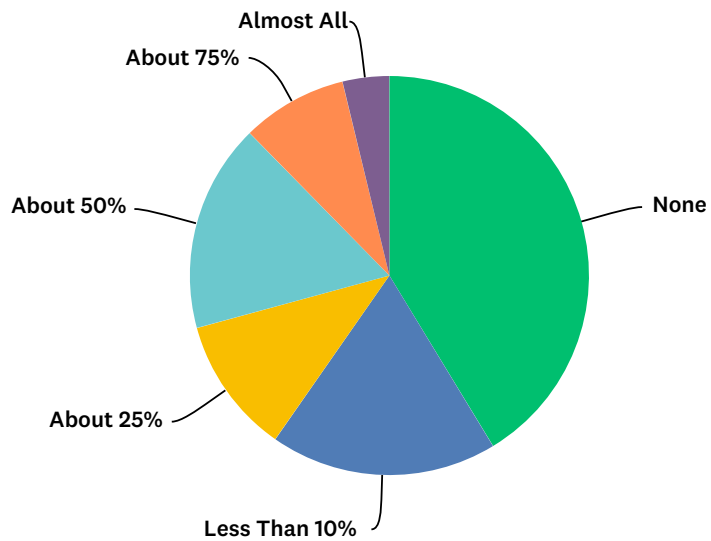


- Single Practitioner, Traditional - 90% or more of your revenue from acupuncture/herbs
- Single Practitioner, Broad Scope - 20% or more of your revenue from something other than a...
- Multiple Practitioner, Traditional - more than one acupuncture/herb practitioners in ...
- Multiple Practitioners, Broad Scope - more than one acupuncture/herb practitioners in...
- Specialized Practice - more than 50% of your revenue from something other than acupuncture.
- Interdisciplinary Practice - practicing with at least one other non- acupuncture/herb...
- Integrated Interdisciplinary Practice - practicing with at least two other non- acupunctur...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single Practitioner, Traditional - 90% or more of your revenue from acupuncture/herbs	62%	245
Single Practitioner, Broad Scope - 20% or more of your revenue from something other than acupuncture/herbs	13%	50
Multiple Practitioner, Traditional - more than one acupuncture/herb practitioners in the office, 90% or more of your revenue from acupuncture/herbs	9%	36
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	5%	20
Specialized Practice - more than 50% of your revenue from something other than acupuncture/herbs	3%	12
Interdisciplinary Practice - practicing with at least one other non- acupuncture/herb professionals (not including massage therapists) where some expenses are shared	4%	17
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	4%	17
TOTAL		397

Q8 What percentage of your revenue is from third-party payers?

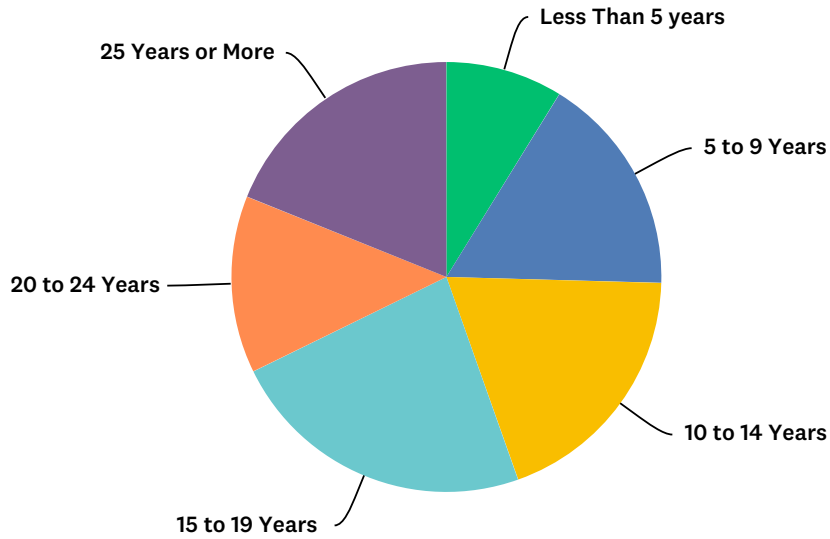
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	41%	164
Less Than 10%	18%	73
About 25%	11%	44
About 50%	17%	67
About 75%	9%	34
Almost All	4%	15
TOTAL		397

Q9 How long have you been in practice?

Answered: 397 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less Than 5 years	9% 35
5 to 9 Years	17% 66
10 to 14 Years	19% 76
15 to 19 Years	23% 92
20 to 24 Years	13% 53
25 Years or More	19% 75
TOTAL	397