

Nutritional Supplement Survey II Doctor/Patient Interactions

Executive Summary

A RESEARCH REPORT BY



METHODOLOGY

This survey was initiated on April 21, 2011 by MPA Media, publishers of *Dynamic Chiropractic PracticeINSIGHTS*, *Dynamic Chiropractic*, *Acupuncture Today*, *Nutritional Wellness* and *To Your Health*. The survey was sent to 15,467 doctors of chiropractic (DC). The response rate was 1 percent. Like all online surveys, participants tend to “self-select” based upon their interest in the topic presented.

DISCUSSION

This survey was created to establish the habits and opinions of DCs as they relate to the use of nutritional supplements in their practice. This includes how DCs integrate nutritional supplement transactions and treatment options into their practice.

Of those surveyed, the first question reveals that 91 percent of DCs currently offer nutritional supplements to their patients, while 9 percent say they are considering offering these supplements to their patients. No respondents indicate that they do not offer nutritional supplements and are not interested.

Overall, it appears that DCs are recommending a wide range of nutritional supplements to their patients. Nearly three quarters of DCs (72 percent) recommend fish oil regularly to their patients and another 71 percent regularly recommend a multi-vitamin. More than two thirds (67 percent) of DCs report that they regularly recommend vitamin D supplements. More than half of DCs sometimes recommend folic acid (58 percent), vitamin C (57 percent) and vitamin B (51 percent), while just less than half sometimes recommend a children’s formula (49 percent), probiotic (48 percent), anti-inflammatory (47 percent), magnesium (46 percent) and a women’s formula (44 percent). More than half (53 percent) never recommend a senior citizen’s formula.

Nearly half of DCs (49 percent) recommend nutritional supplements to their patients during the report of findings or the first follow-up exam, while 29 percent make their recommendation after conducting specific lab tests and 16 percent recommend supplements during the initial exam. Another 36 percent of respondents chose an option specifying “other.” Most of these responses reflect a need for flexibility when recommending



supplements. For example, many comment that they only recommend nutritional supplements to their patients as needed or, that it depends on the patient.

Nearly two-thirds of DCs report that their front office person completes the transaction when the DC sells a nutritional supplement in their office. A quarter of respondents say they complete the transaction themselves. A small percentage of DCs have a chiropractic assistant (5 percent) or an office manager (4 percent) complete this type of transaction.

The majority of DCs (61 percent) sell a 30-day supply to their patients, followed by a 60-day supply (19 percent) and a 90-day supply (10 percent). When asked who follows up with the patient when they are close to running out of their nutritional supplement supply, more than half (52 percent) of DCs say they follow up personally, followed by a front office person (17 percent), a chiropractic assistant (6 percent) and an office manager (5 percent). A third of respondents (33 percent) chose an option specifying "other." Most of these responses indicate that only slightly less than the 33 percent who checked "other" don't follow up at all with their patients.

More than two-thirds of DCs (67 percent) still use a paper health record to record what supplements their patients are taking, 19 percent use electronic health record, 9 percent don't record what supplements their patients are taking and 4 percent use a component of chiropractic software other than EHR.

The majority of DCs (71 percent) price the nutritional supplements they offer to their patients at suggested retail, while 9 percent price at up to a 10 percent discount, 5 percent price at up to a 20 percent discount and 2 percent price up to a 30 percent discount.

If given a choice, more than three quarters of DCs (76 percent) would prefer to carry a nutritional product line that is sold only through doctors of chiropractic in their office, compared to 2 percent who would prefer to carry a nutritional product line that is well-known to consumers and patients as it is available in retail stores. Twenty-two percent say they would carry both types of product lines.

More than three-quarters of DCs (77 percent) disagree with the statement that patients should only take vitamins if they have an established vitamin deficiency. The majority of respondents (86 percent) agree that all patients should take a multivitamin, while 85 percent agree that women should take a special combination of nutritional supplements. Eighty-three percent of DCs agree that senior citizens should take a special combination of



nutritional supplements and another 81 percent agree that children should do the same. More than three-quarters (78 percent) agree that all patients should participate in a comprehensive nutritional supplement program.

The majority of DCs (81 percent) recommend herbs in conjunction with nutritional supplements, while 12 percent do not recommend herbs and another 6 percent don't recommend herbs, but are considering it. More than half (56 percent) are concerned about a potential conflict between herbs and nutritional supplements when taken simultaneously, while the remainder (44 percent) are not concerned.

When asked to name the types of patient complaints they have had the most success with using nutritional supplements, 78 percent say they have had the most success with increased overall health followed by inflammatory conditions (73 percent), musculoskeletal pain (71 percent), female-specific nutritional needs (60 percent), sleep disturbance (52 percent), headaches and sports/performance-related injuries (41 percent), a specific ailment (39 percent), age-related disorders and male-specific nutritional needs (37 percent), autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus (35 percent) and muscle weakness (28 percent).

The results of a series of hypothetical questions geared towards the DCs who answered "no, but considering it" yielded very similar results to the DCs who currently offer nutritional supplements to their patients. A noticeable difference occurred when both groups were asked who would follow up with the patient when they are close to running out of the supplements. Here, more than half of those DCs who offer nutritional supplements say they follow up themselves, but many also report that nobody follows up. Those who don't offer supplements, but are considering it did not mention not following up as an option at all. Forty-three percent say that a front office person would follow up, 29 percent say they would follow up themselves, 14 percent would have an office manager follow up and 14 percent would use an automated e-mail system.

Another difference was noted when asked about herb usage with nutritional supplements. The majority (81 percent) of DCs who offer nutritional supplements offer herbs in conjunction, while only 29 percent of the DCs who do not offer nutritional supplements say they would offer herbs as well. However, the other 71 percent say they would consider offering herbs.



CONCLUSION

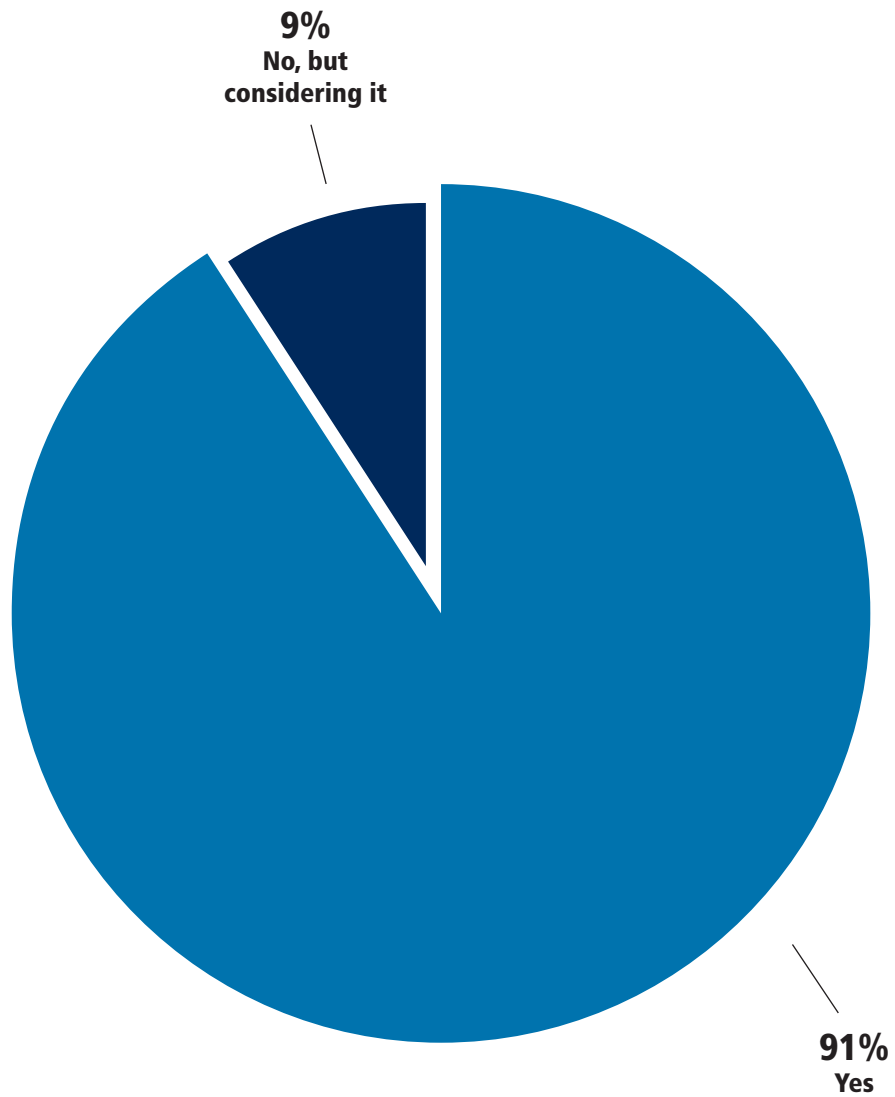
Overall, it appears that the majority of DCs are offering nutritional supplements to their patients; and those that did not were considering it. While most DCs (67 percent) use a paper health record to record what supplements patients are taking, a third of respondents say they don't follow up at all with their patients and 52 percent of DCs say they follow up personally. This questions whether DCs are utilizing the most efficient process.

While more than half of DCs (53 percent) say they never recommend a senior citizen's formula, 83 percent agree that senior citizens should take a special combination of nutritional supplements. The same quirk also occurred with women's and children's formulas. Only 44 percent say that they sometimes recommend a women's formula, but 85 percent agree that women should take a special combination of nutritional supplements. Just less than half (49 percent) sometimes recommend a children's formula, but 81 percent agree that children should take a special combination of nutritional supplements.

The information in this survey should be used to better understand how DCs integrate nutritional supplement transactions and treatment option into their practice. It should also be used to understand the DCs' overall philosophy on the use of nutritional supplements.



1. Do you currently offer nutritional supplements to your patients?

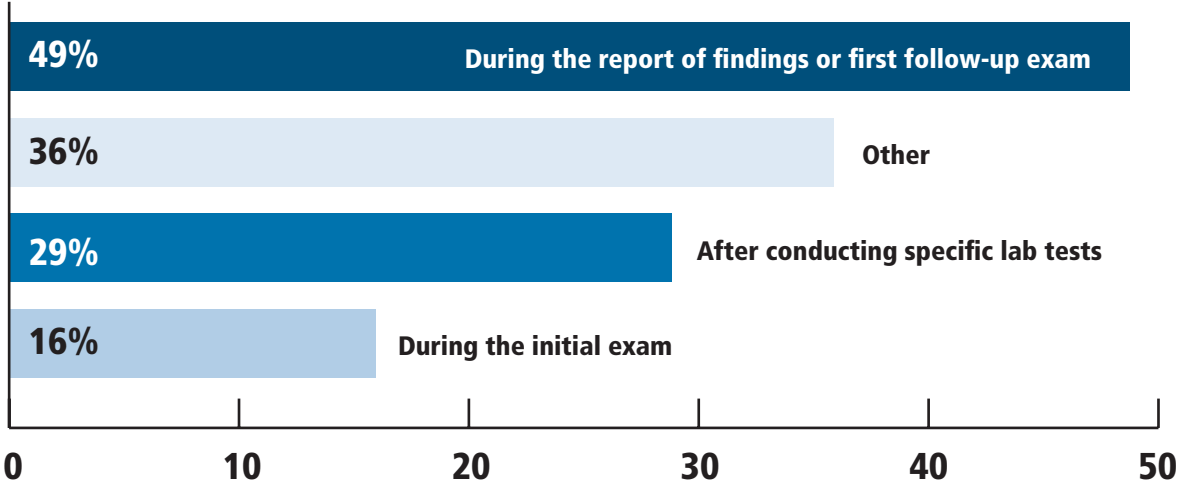


2. Do you recommend the following nutritional supplements to your patients?

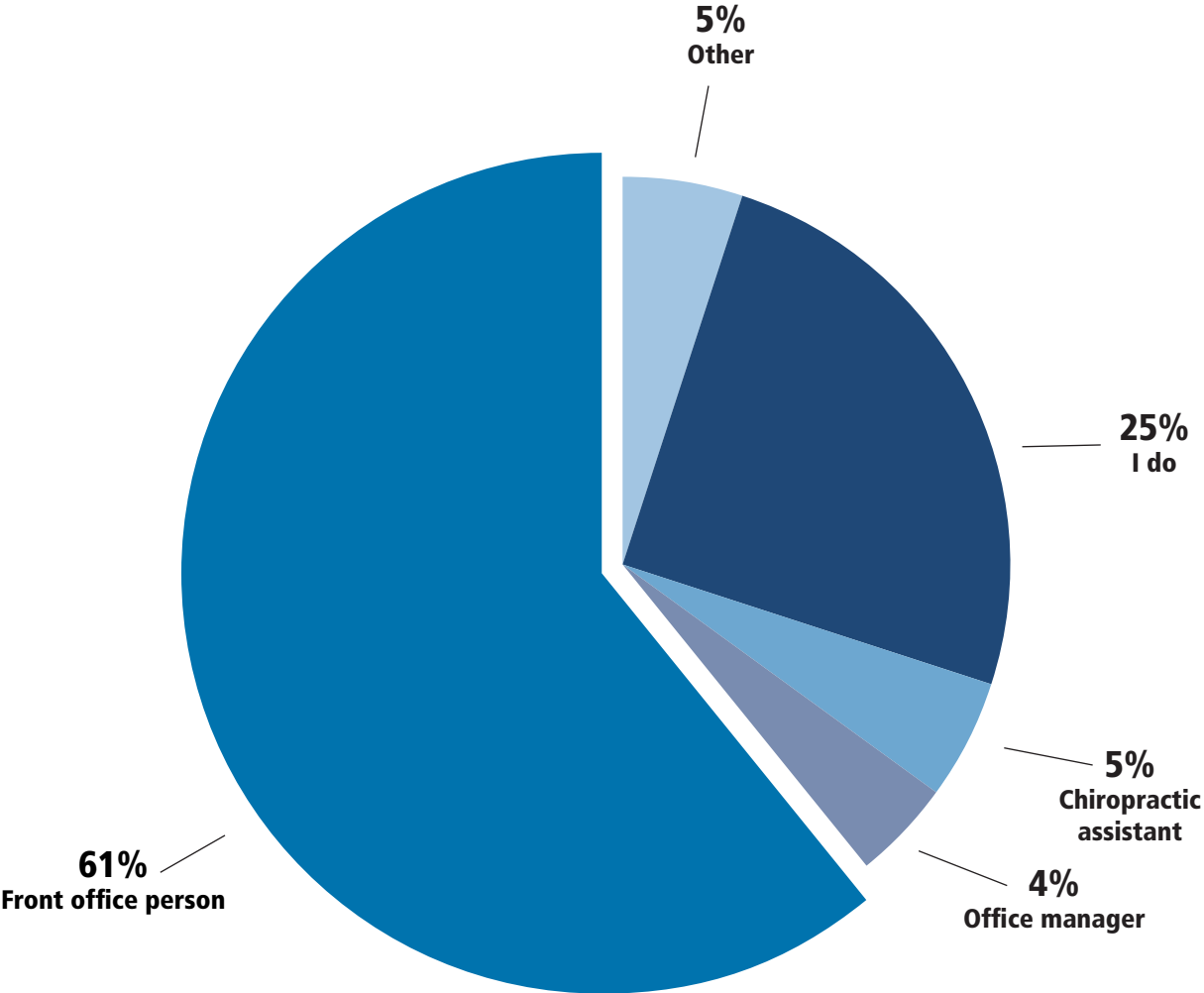
	Regularly	Sometimes	Never
Fish oil	72%	27%	1%
Multi-vitamin	71%	27%	2%
Vitamin D	67%	28%	5%
Anti-inflammatory	46%	47%	8%
Probiotic	45%	48%	7%
Magnesium	44%	46%	10%
Vitamin B	40%	51%	9%
Vitamin C	38%	57%	5%
Folic Acid	22%	58%	20%
Children's formula	18%	49%	33%
Women's formula	18%	44%	38%
Senior citizen's formula	9%	38%	53%



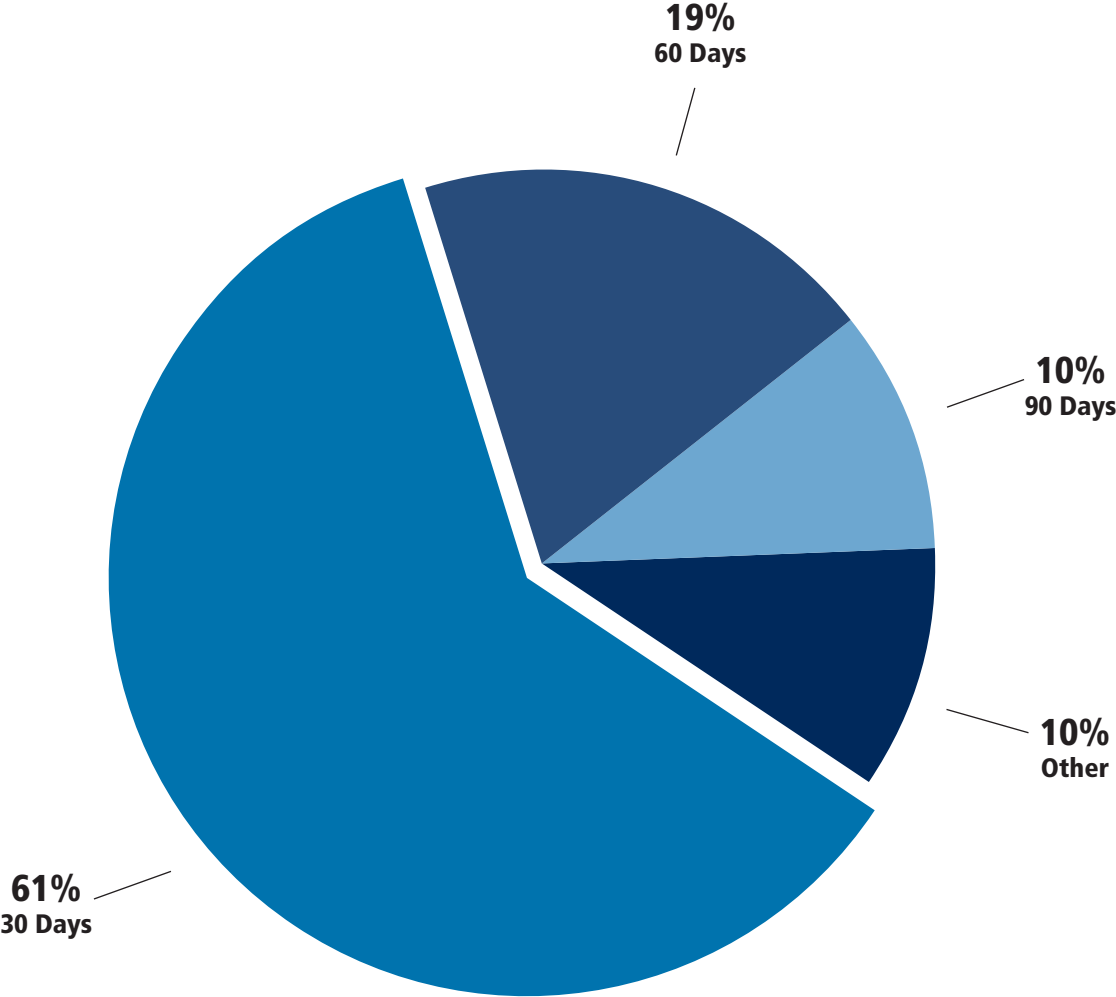
3. At what point do you recommend nutritional supplements to your patients?



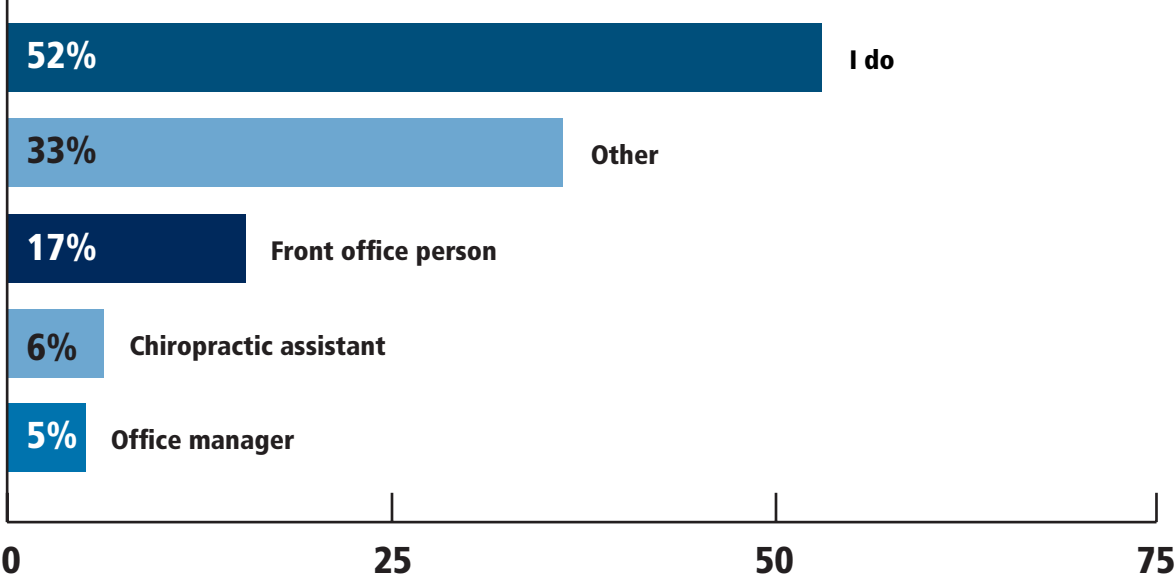
4. Who completes the transaction when you sell nutritional supplements in your office?



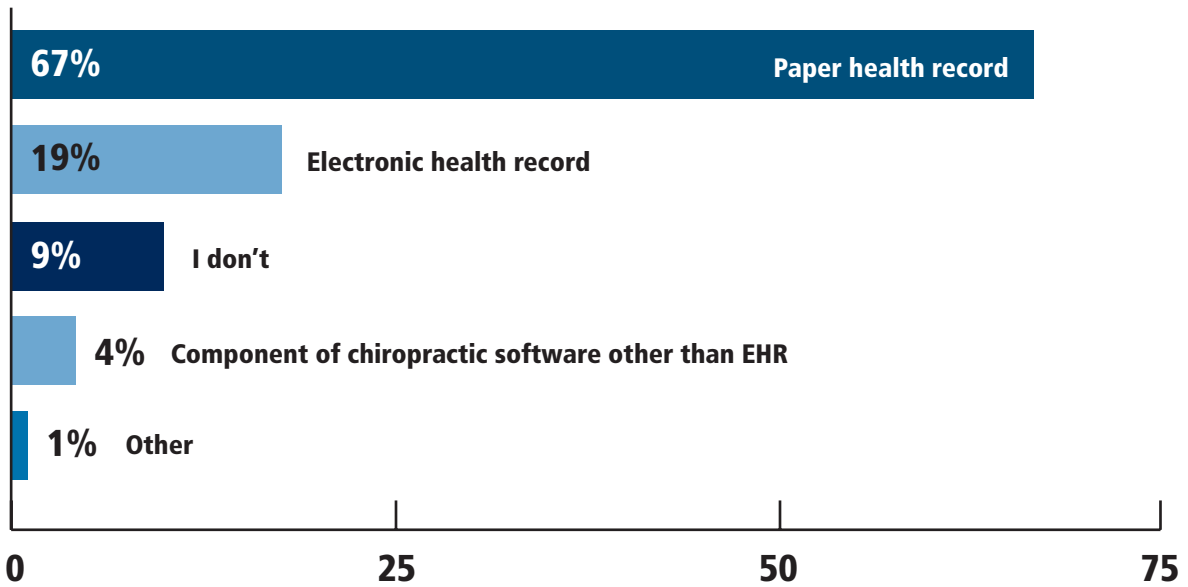
5. How long of a supply do you usually sell to your patients?



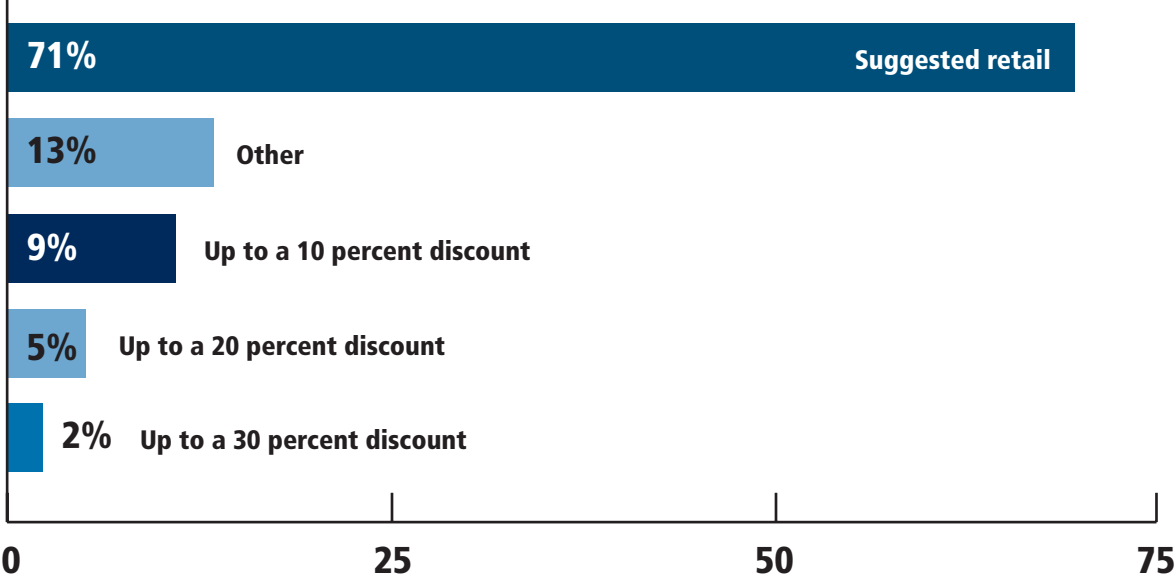
6. Who follows up with the patient when they are close to running out of their nutritional supplement supply?



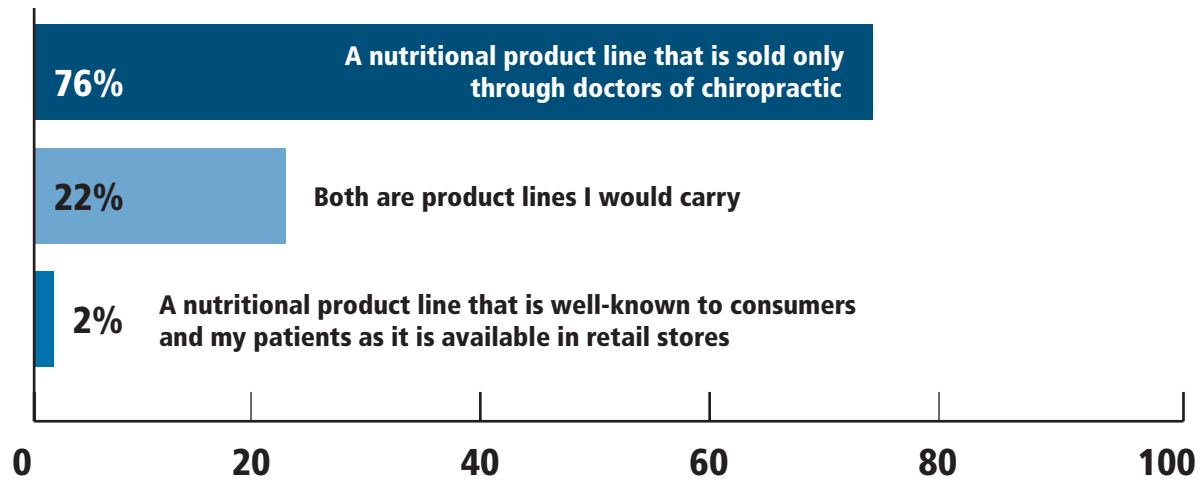
7. How do you record what supplements your patients are taking?



8. How do you price the nutritional supplements you offer your patients?



9. If given a choice, which of the following nutritional product lines would you prefer to carry in your clinic?

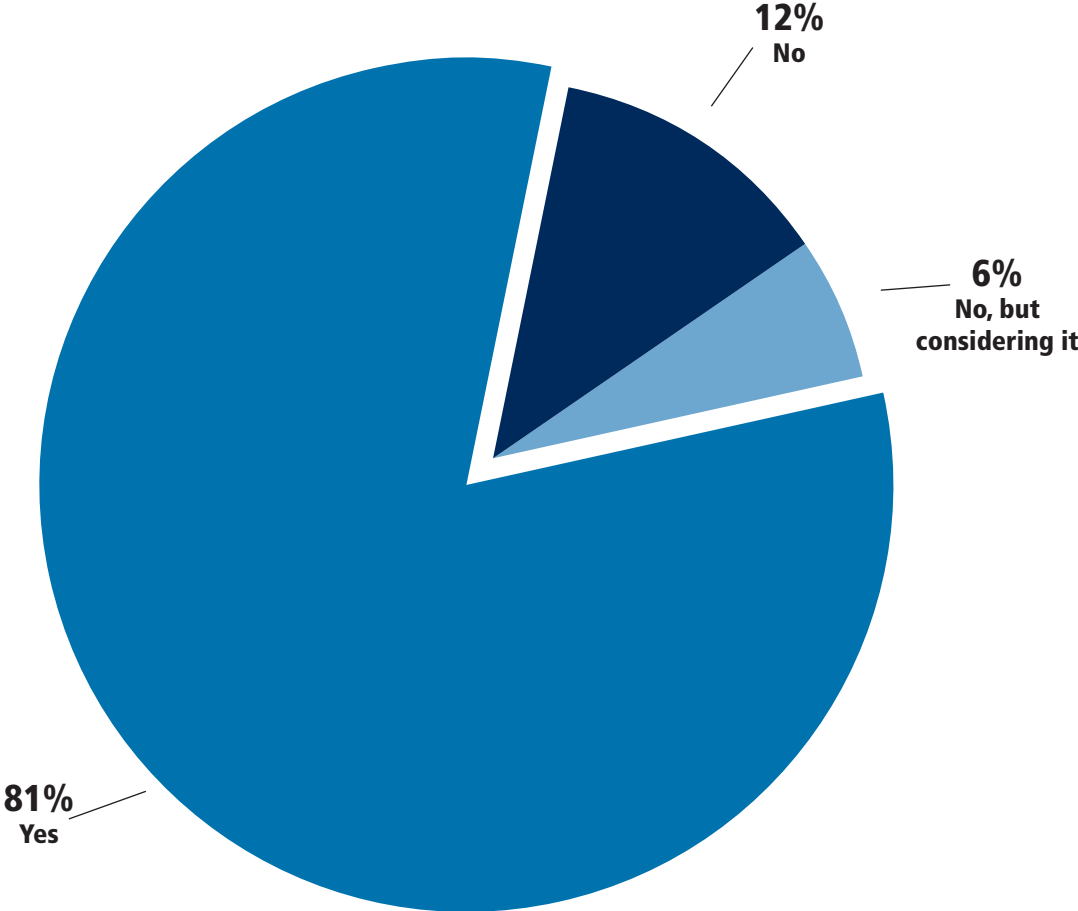


10. How well do you agree with the following statements regarding nutritional supplements?

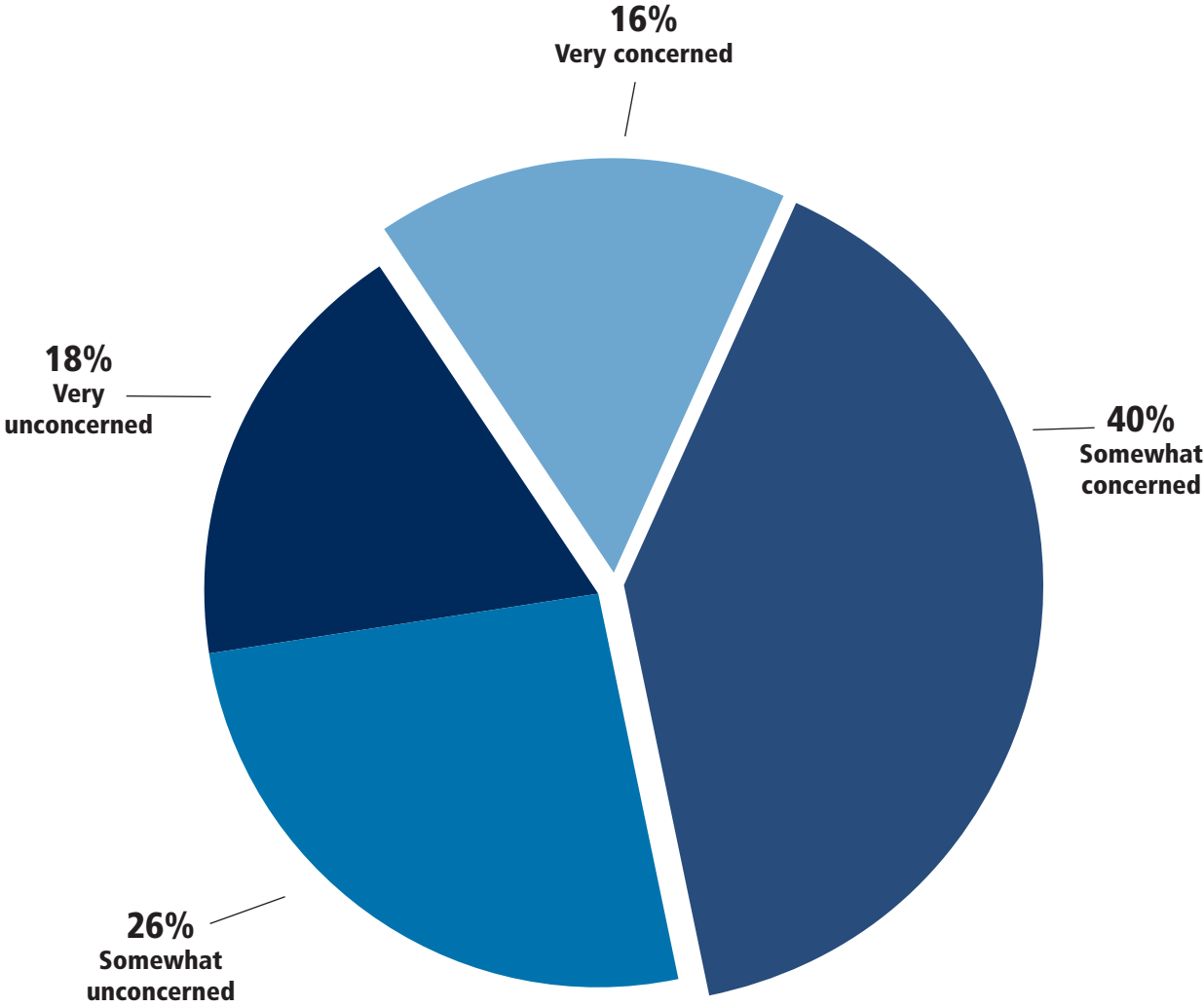
	Totally agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Totally disagree
All patients should take a multivitamin	61%	25%	9%	5%
Women should take a special combination of nutritional supplements	25%	60%	12%	4%
Senior citizens/and or older patients should take a special combination of nutritional supplements	27%	56%	13%	4%
Children should take a special combination of nutritional supplements	23%	58%	14%	5%
All patients should participate in a comprehensive nutritional supplement program	41%	37%	16%	6%
Patients should only take vitamins if they have an established vitamin deficiency	7%	16%	29%	18%



11. Do you recommend herbs in conjunction with nutritional supplements?



12. How concerned are you with a potential conflict between herbs and nutritional supplements when taken simultaneously?



13. What types of patient complaints have you had the most success with using nutritional supplements?

