



National Certification Commission  
for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine



# **Descriptive Demographic and Clinical Practice Profile of Acupuncturists: An Executive Summary from the NCCAOM<sup>®</sup> 2013 Job Analysis Survey**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Survey Methodology</b> .....	3
<b>Survey Results</b> .....	4
Question 1: What is your gender? .....	4
Question 2: What is your age? .....	5
Question 3: What is your ethnic origin? .....	6
Question 4: How many years have you been in practice as an AOM practitioner? .....	7
Question 5: Do you hold an NCCAOM® certification? .....	8
Question 6: In what state or country do you currently practice? .....	9
Question 7: In what state(s) do you hold an active license?.....	11
Question 8: In your primary practice setting, how do patients pay for their care?.....	12
Question 9: In a typical week, during the last year, how many hours, per week, did you devote to the following activities? .....	14
Question 10: On average, in the last year, how many hours per week did you spend in clinical practice as an AOM practitioner to include the following activities: clinical work such as treating patients as well as non-clinical work such as maintaining records, marketing, and practice management activities such as billing. ....	16
Question 11: If you were working part-time or less, select the primary reason.....	17
Question 12: If you were providing direct patient care, which of the following do you consider your primary practice setting? .....	18
Question 13: If in a group setting (i.e., clinic, hospital, etc.), which of the following comes closest to describing how you practice in your primary setting practice?.....	19
Question 14: Please indicate any active or non-active non-acupuncturist license(s) you currently hold. ....	20
Question 15: What percentage of your patients is referred to you by another healthcare professional? .....	21
Question 16: What age category of patients do you treat?.....	22
Question 17: What style(s) of AOM do you practice?.....	23
Question 18: Check your areas of special interest .....	25
Question 20: How many returning patients do you see in a one-month period?.....	27
Question 21: What is your average charge for a first visit? .....	28
Question 22: What is your average charge for a returning visit? .....	29
Question 23: What was your total gross personal income before taxes last year? .....	30
Question 24: Using the following scale (1 to 5), please indicate the frequency of the following complaints from your patients .....	31
Question 25: In a typical month, to what percentage of patients do you provide the following services? .....	33
<b>Summary</b> .....	33



## Introduction

Minimally, every five years the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM<sup>®</sup>) conducts a job analysis (JA) also known as an occupational analysis or practice analysis, for the primary purpose of validating the content of its certification examinations used by the acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) profession for documentation of competency to practice as an entry-level acupuncturist. The foundation of a valid, reliable, and legally defensible professional licensing/certification program is a well-constructed JA study. The JA study establishes the link between test scores achieved on licensing exams and the competencies being tested; therefore, pass or fail decisions correlate to competent performance. The most recent JA was conducted in 2013. The full *NCCAOM<sup>®</sup> 2013 Job Analysis Report* is published [on the NCCAOM website](#) .

A secondary reason for conducting the periodic JA reports has been to collect additional AOM workforce related information. The NCCAOM began to systematically expand the demographic and clinical practice questions included in the survey instrument in 2008. This executive summary provides a summary of all the demographic and clinical practice data collected from survey respondents of the 2013 JA.

## Survey Methodology

The NCCAOM<sup>®</sup>, worked with Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT), to conduct a job analysis of the existing Foundations of Oriental Medicine (FOM), Biomedicine (BIO), Acupuncture with Point Location (ACPL), and Chinese Herbology (CH) examinations.

The JA included the establishment and implementation of an online survey instrument that described the performance activities (task elements) and knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required of a competent AOM practitioner. In addition, a set of demographic and clinical practice questions were asked of each survey respondent. Based on the results of the survey, the NCCAOM not only evaluated the need for a content update for the existing certification/licensing examinations, but also provided much needed demographic data regarding the AOM profession. See the [Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Biomedicine, Acupuncture with Point Location, and Chinese Herbology Job Analysis Report 2013](#). This report provides an overview of the survey design, sampling methodology, survey reliability, analysis, and results. Survey results of demographic data are displayed graphically.



To ensure maximum validity with regard to responses, a two-tier sampling approach was used. For complete information regarding the population and sampling sizes for this survey, please review the *Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Biomedicine, Acupuncture with Point Location, Chinese Herbology, Job Analysis Report 2013* published on the [NCCAOM website](http://www.nccaom.com)

## Survey Results

The following results are descriptive statistics of all the demographic and clinical practice questions asked in the 2013 JA survey. Most all individual percentages, for all figures, have a margin of error in the +/- 1 to 4% range with 95% confidence.

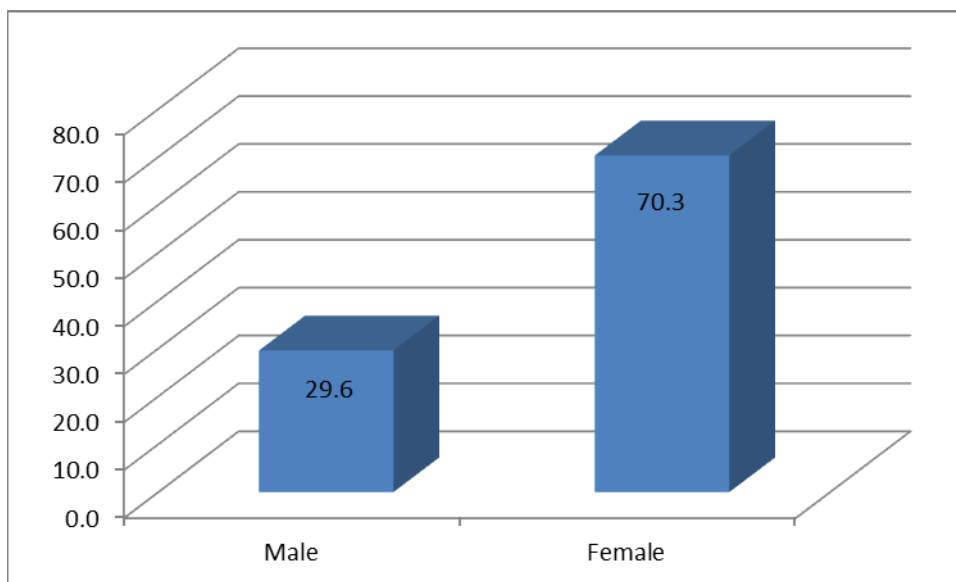
### Question 1: *What is your gender?*

**Answers:** Male, Female, Transgender

**N = 1514**

**Responses:**

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	448	29.6
Female	1065	70.3
Transgender	1	.1



\*Transgender accounted for less than .1% of the responses



The respondent group was made up of approximately 1093 females (70%) and 461 males (29%). There was one transgender individual; 16 respondents did not provide a response.

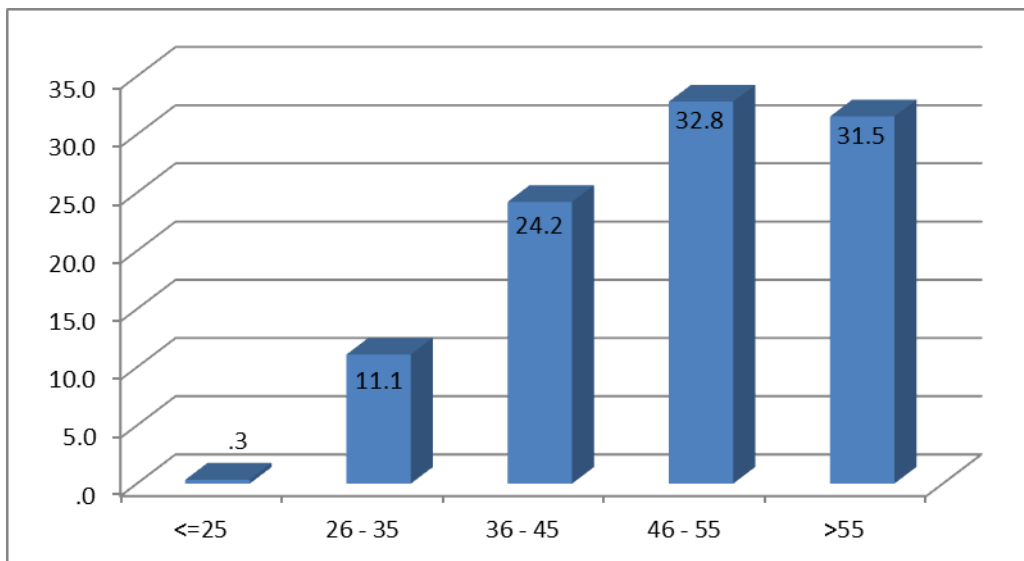
**Question 2: *What is your age?***

**N = 1487\*** (\*NCCAOM excluded ages below 20 as non-valid ages)

**Responses:**

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
<=25	5	.3
26 - 35	165	11.1
36 - 45	360	24.2
46 - 55	488	32.8
>55	469	31.5

Median age was 50



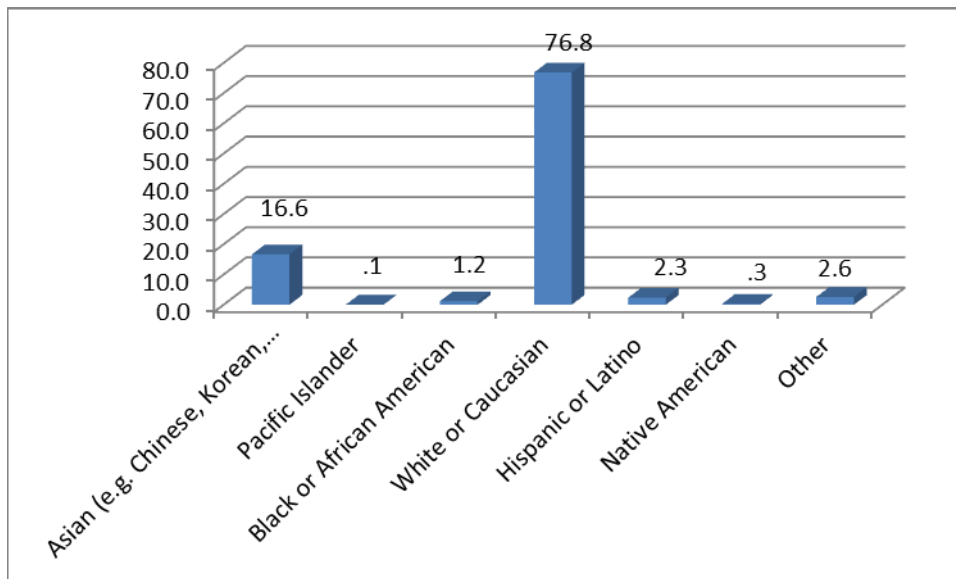


**Question 3: What is your ethnic origin?**

**N = 1502**

**Answers:** Asian, Pacific Islander, Black or African American, White or Caucasian, Hispanic or Latino, Native American, Other

Ethnicity	Frequency	Valid Percent
Asian (e.g. Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)	250	16.6
Pacific Islander	1	.1
Black or African American	18	1.2
White or Caucasian	1154	76.8
Hispanic or Latino	35	2.3
Native American	5	.3
Other	39	2.6



77% (1186 of 1543, Figure 2) of respondents identified themselves as White or Caucasian. The next largest ethnic group was Asian, which comprised 17% (256 of 1543) of the sample. Twenty-eight (28) respondents elected not to provide this information. For a listing of other responses for ethnicity please see *Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Biomedicine, Acupuncture with Point Location, Chinese Herbology, Job Analysis Report 2013* published at [http://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/NCCAOM\\_2013\\_JA\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/NCCAOM_2013_JA_Report.pdf).



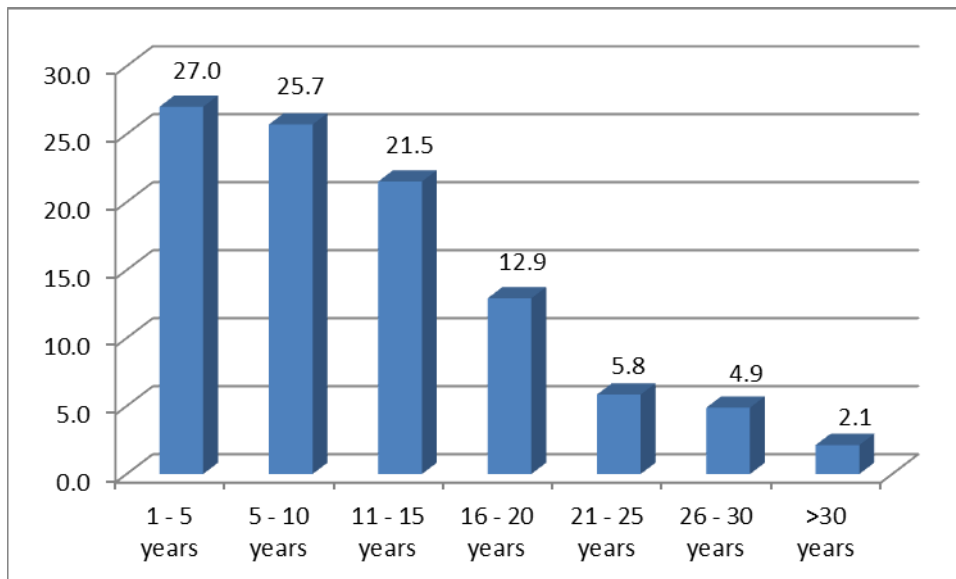
**Question 4: How many years have you been in practice as an AOM practitioner?**

**N = 1455\*** (\*Filtered out any responses less than 2 years of practice)

**Responses:**

Years of Experience	Frequency	Valid Percent
1 - 5 years	393	27.0
5 - 10 years	374	25.7
11 - 15 years	313	21.5
16 - 20 years	188	12.9
21 - 25 years	85	5.8
26 - 30 years	71	4.9
>30 years	31	2.1

The Median years of experience is 10 years





**Question 5: Do you hold an NCCAOM® certification?**

**N = 1435\*** (\*filtered out any individuals that held ONLY a Chinese Herbology certification or ONLY an ABT Certification)

**Answers:** Yes, No

If yes, what active NCCAOM Certifications do you hold? (Select all that apply)

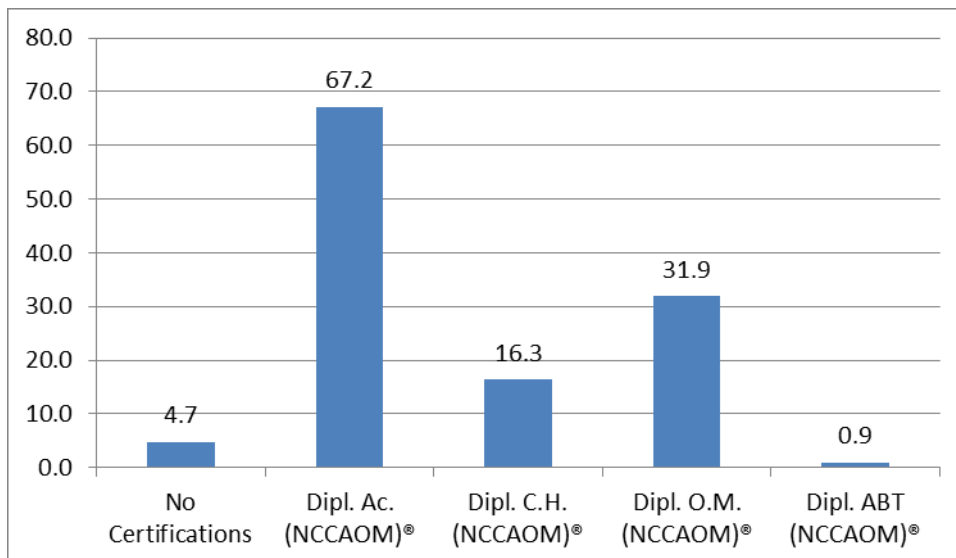
Diplomate of Acupuncture – 1007 Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)®

Diplomate of Chinese Herbology – 245 Dipl. C.H. (NCCAOM)®

Diplomate of Oriental Medicine – 478 Dipl. O.M. (NCCAOM)®

Diplomate of Asian Bodywork Therapy – 14 Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM)®

There were 70 licensed acupuncturists who completed the survey who were not an NCCAOM Diplomate.







**Question 6: In what state or country do you currently practice?** (Check all that apply)

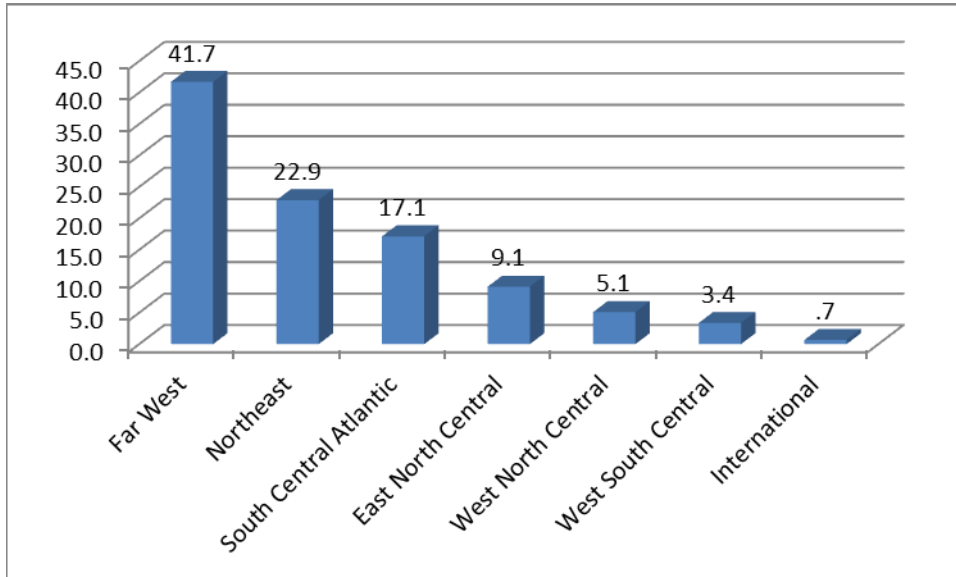
**N = 1511** \* (\* NCCAOM removed all “not currently practicing” respondents and respondents could select more than one region or state)

For comparative analysis with previous JA surveys the NCCAOM used the following regions to group all practicing respondents:

Region	States
<b>Far West</b>	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming
<b>Northeast</b>	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont
<b>South Central Atlantic</b>	Alabama, Delaware, District Of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia
<b>East North Central</b>	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin
<b>West North Central</b>	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota
<b>West South Central</b>	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas
<b>International</b>	Outside of the United States

**Responses**

Region	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Far West</b>	630	41.7
<b>Northeast</b>	346	22.9
<b>South Central Atlantic</b>	259	17.1
<b>East North Central</b>	138	9.1
<b>West North Central</b>	77	5.1
<b>West South Central</b>	51	3.4
<b>International</b>	10	.7





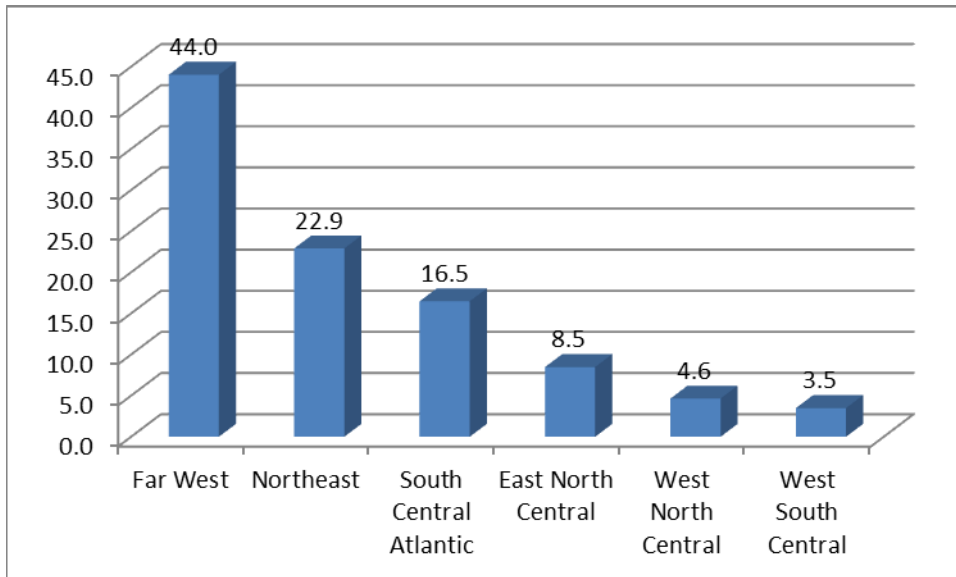
**Question 7: In what state(s) do you hold an active license?** (Check all that apply)

**N = 1463**

(\* NCCAOM removed all “not currently practicing” respondents and respondents could select more than one region or state)

Region	States
<b>Far West</b>	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming
<b>Northeast</b>	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont
<b>South Central Atlantic</b>	Alabama, Delaware, District Of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia
<b>East North Central</b>	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin
<b>West North Central</b>	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota
<b>West South Central</b>	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas

Region	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Far West</b>	644	44.0
<b>Northeast</b>	335	22.9
<b>South Central Atlantic</b>	241	16.5
<b>East North Central</b>	124	8.5
<b>West North Central</b>	68	4.6
<b>West South Central</b>	51	3.5

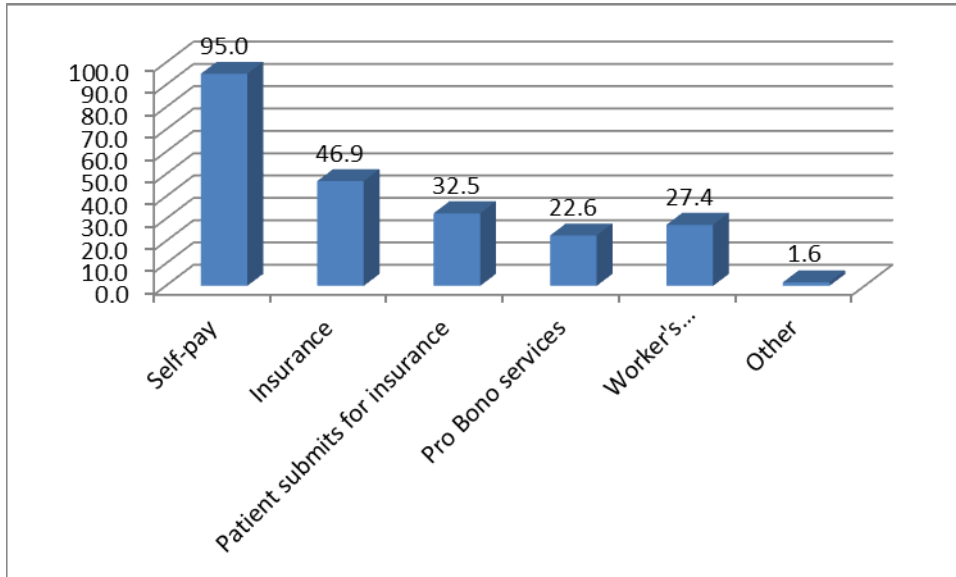


**Question 8:** *In your primary practice setting, how do patients pay for their care?* (Check all that apply)

**N = 1494** (\*respondents allowed to select more than one payment type)

**Answers:** Self-pay, Insurance, Patient submits for insurance, Pro Bono services, Worker's compensation/personal injury, and Other.

Payment	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Self-pay</b>	1419	95.0
<b>Insurance</b>	701	46.9
<b>Patient submits for insurance</b>	486	32.5
<b>Pro Bono services</b>	337	22.6
<b>Worker's compensation/personal injury</b>	409	27.4
<b>Other</b>	24	1.6



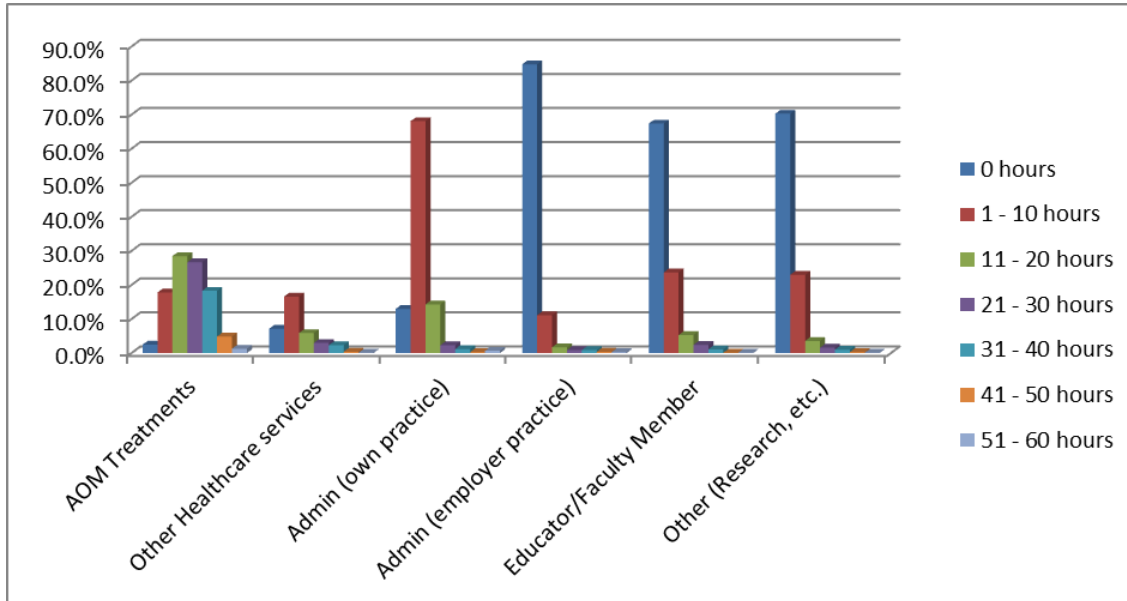


**Question 9: In a typical week, during the last year, how many hours, per week, did you devote to the following activities?** (Please indicate all that apply by filling in a number between 0 and 60 for the following.

\*NCCAOM removed all responses over 60

- a. Practitioner providing AOM treatments **N = 1468**
- b. Practitioner providing other healthcare professional services (e.g., nursing, physical therapy, etc.)  
**N = 1130**
- c. Administrator or business manager in your own practice **N = 1365**
- d. Administrator or business manager for an employer **N = 1027**
- e. Educator/Faculty Member **N = 1102**
- f. Other (Researcher, etc.) **N = 933**

Services Performed	0 hours	1 - 10 hours	11 - 20 hours	21 - 30 hours	31 - 40 hours	41 - 50 hours	51 - 60 hours
<b>AOM Treatments</b>	2.5%	17.8%	28.5%	26.7%	18.3%	4.9%	1.3%
<b>Other Healthcare services</b>	7.2%	16.6%	5.9%	3.0%	2.3%	0.4%	0.1%
<b>Admin (own practice)</b>	13.0%	68.1%	14.3%	2.3%	1.2%	0.3%	0.7%
<b>Admin (employer practice)</b>	84.8%	11.1%	1.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.4%	0.3%
<b>Educator/Faculty Member</b>	67.4%	23.7%	5.3%	2.4%	1.1%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Other (Research, etc.)</b>	70.3%	23.0%	3.6%	1.6%	1.0%	0.3%	0.1%



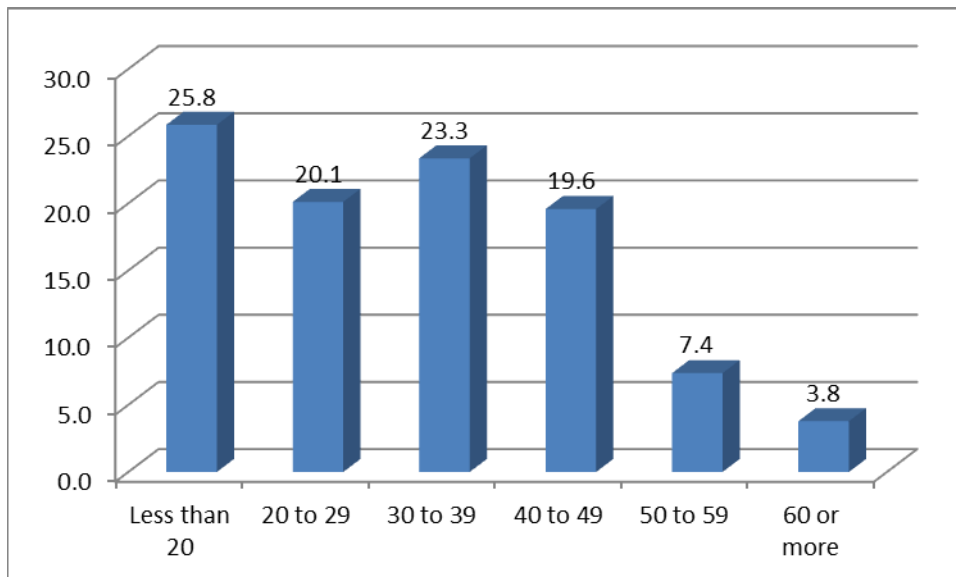


**Question 10:** *On average, in the last year, how many hours per week did you spend in clinical practice as an AOM practitioner to include the following activities: clinical work such as treating patients as well as non-clinical work such as maintaining records, marketing, and practice management activities such as billing.*

**N = 1482**

**Answers:** Less than 20; 20 to 29; 30 to 39; 40 to 49; 50 to 59; 60 or more

Hours per Week	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 20	383	25.8
20 to 29	298	20.1
30 to 39	346	23.3
40 to 49	290	19.6
50 to 59	109	7.4
60 or more	56	3.8





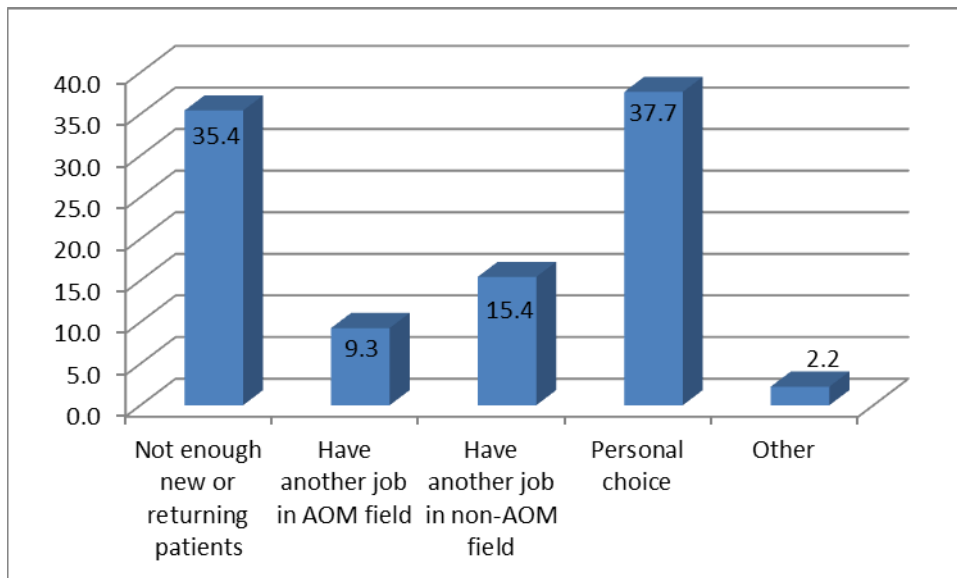


**Question 11:** *If you were working part-time or less, select the primary reason.*

**N = 895**

**Answers:** Not enough new or returning patients; Have another job in AOM field; Have another job in non-AOM field; Personal choice; Other

Part Time Reason	Frequency	Valid Percent
Not enough new or returning patients	317	35.4
Have another job in AOM field	83	9.3
Have another job in non-AOM field	138	15.4
Personal choice	337	37.7
Other	20	2.2



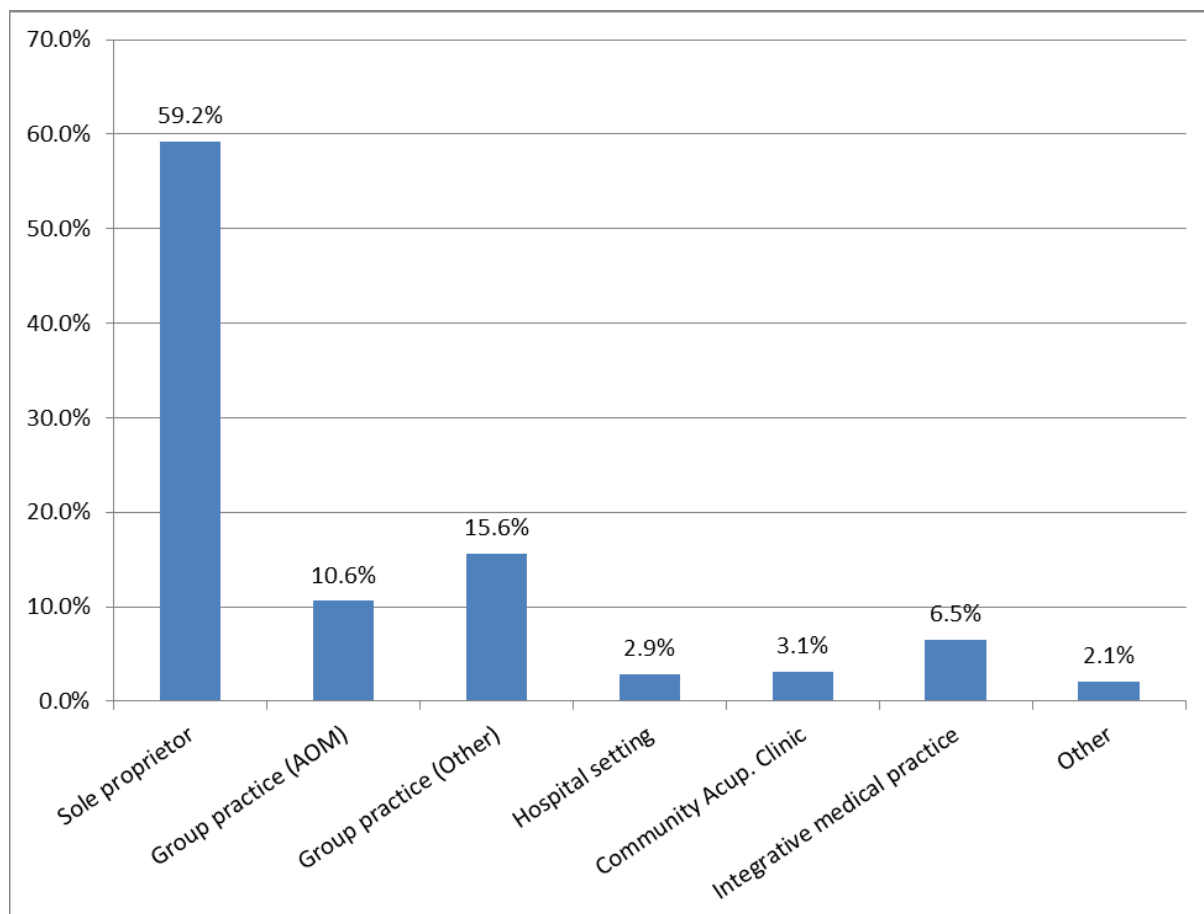


**Question 12:** *If you were providing direct patient care, which of the following do you consider your primary practice setting?*

**N = 1448\*** (removed “not providing direct patient care”)

**Answers:** Sole proprietor, Group practice (AOM), Group practice (Other), Hospital setting, Community Acupuncture (Acup). Clinic, Integrative medical practice, Other.

Practice Setting	Frequency	Valid Percent
Sole proprietor	857	59.2%
Group practice (AOM)	153	10.6%
Group practice (Other)	226	15.6%
Hospital setting	42	2.9%
Community Acup Clinic	45	3.1%
Integrative medical practice	94	6.5%
Other	31	2.1%

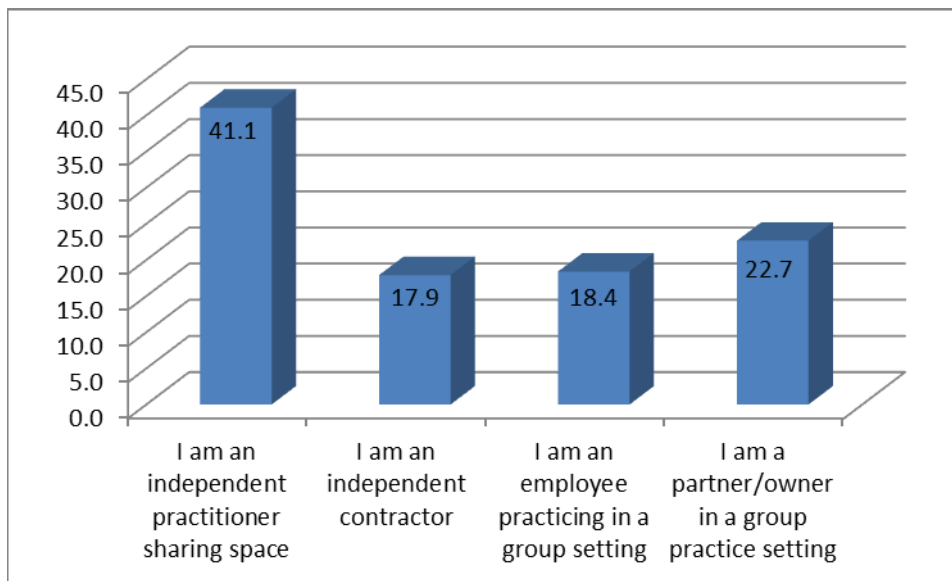




**Question 13:** *If in a group setting (i.e., clinic, hospital, etc.), which of the following comes closest to describing how you practice in your primary setting practice?*

**N = 609\*** (removed responses indicating “Not practicing in a group practice as a primary practice setting”)

Group Setting	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>I am an independent practitioner sharing space</b>	250	41.1
<b>I am an independent contractor</b>	109	17.9
<b>I am an employee practicing in a group setting</b>	112	18.4
<b>I am a partner/owner in a group practice setting</b>	138	22.7



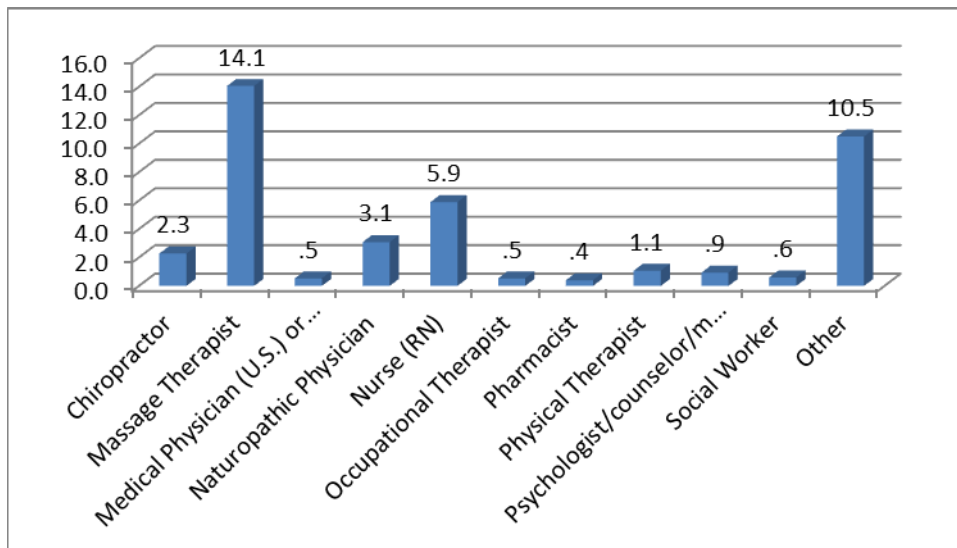


**Question 14:** Please indicate any active or non-active non-acupuncturist license(s) you currently hold.

**N = 1494**

**Answers:** Chiropractor; Homeopathic Physician; Massage Therapist; Medical Physician (U.S.) or Osteopathic Physician; Naturopathic Physician; Nurse (RN); Occupational Therapist; Pharmacist; Physical Therapist; Psychologist/counselor/mental health professional; Social Worker; Other

Professional License	Frequency	Valid Percent
Chiropractor	34	2.3
Massage Therapist	210	14.1
Medical Physician (U.S.) or Osteopathic Physician	8	.5
Naturopathic Physician	46	3.1
Nurse (RN)	88	5.9
Occupational Therapist	8	.5
Pharmacist	6	.4
Physical Therapist	16	1.1
Psychologist/counselor/mental health professional	14	.9
Social Worker	9	.6
Other	157	10.5



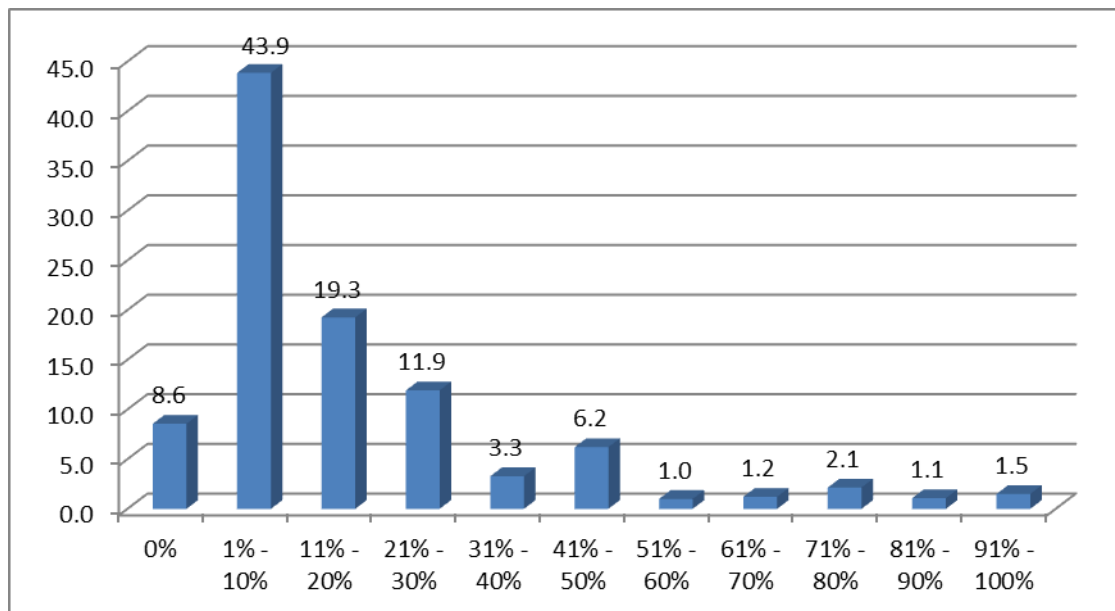


**Question 15: What percentage of your patients is referred to you by another healthcare professional?**

**N = 1402**

**Responses:**

Percent Referred	Frequency	Valid Percent
0%	120	8.6
1% - 10%	615	43.9
11% - 20%	270	19.3
21% - 30%	167	11.9
31% - 40%	46	3.3
41% - 50%	87	6.2
51% - 60%	14	1.0
61% - 70%	17	1.2
71% - 80%	30	2.1
81% - 90%	15	1.1
91% - 100%	21	1.5





**Question 16: What age category of patients do you treat? (Choose all that apply)**

**N = 1713**

**Answers:**

Seniors only (ages 71 yrs. and older)

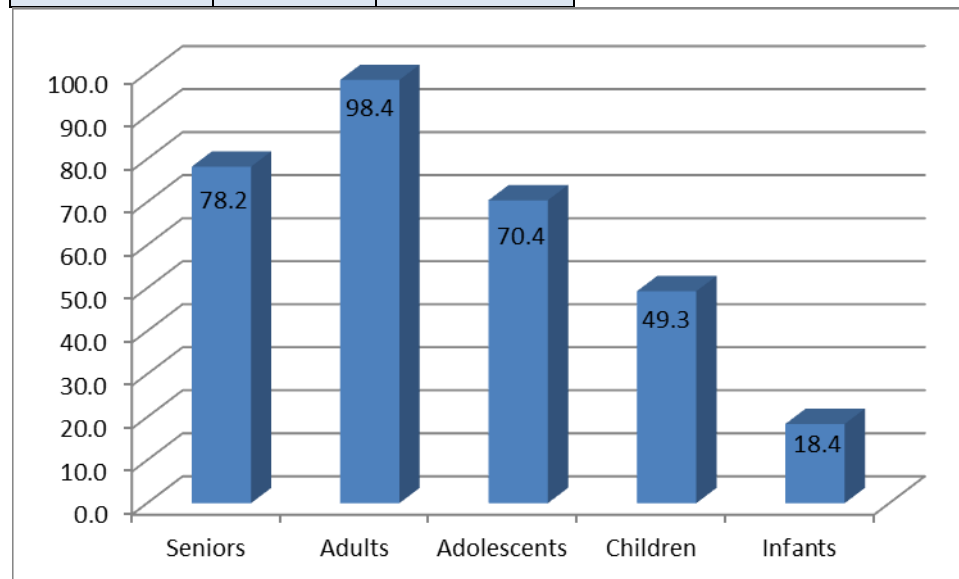
Adults only (ages 18 yrs. to 70 yrs.)

Adolescents (ages 13 yrs. to 17 yrs.)

Children (ages 13 months to 12 yrs.)

Infants (ages 12 months and less)

Age Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Seniors	1113	78.2
Adults	1400	98.4
Adolescents	1002	70.4
Children	701	49.3
Infants	262	18.4





**Question 17: What style(s) of AOM do you practice?** (Select all that apply)

**N = 1423**

**Answers:**

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Japanese

Korean

Worsley Five Element

Vietnamese

French Energetic

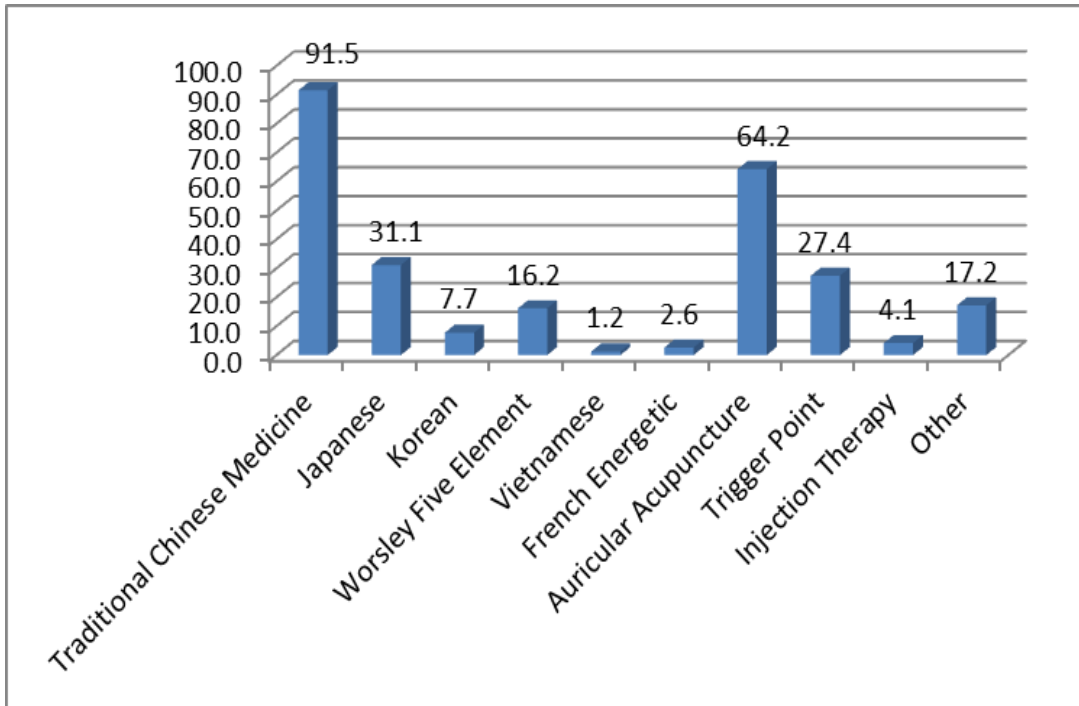
Auricular Acupuncture

Trigger Point

Injection Therapy

Other

AOM Style	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Traditional Chinese Medicine</b>	1302	91.5
<b>Japanese</b>	443	31.1
<b>Korean</b>	110	7.7
<b>Worsley Five Element</b>	230	16.2
<b>Vietnamese</b>	17	1.2
<b>French Energetic</b>	37	2.6
<b>Auricular Acupuncture</b>	914	64.2
<b>Trigger Point</b>	390	27.4
<b>Injection Therapy</b>	59	4.1
<b>Other</b>	245	17.2







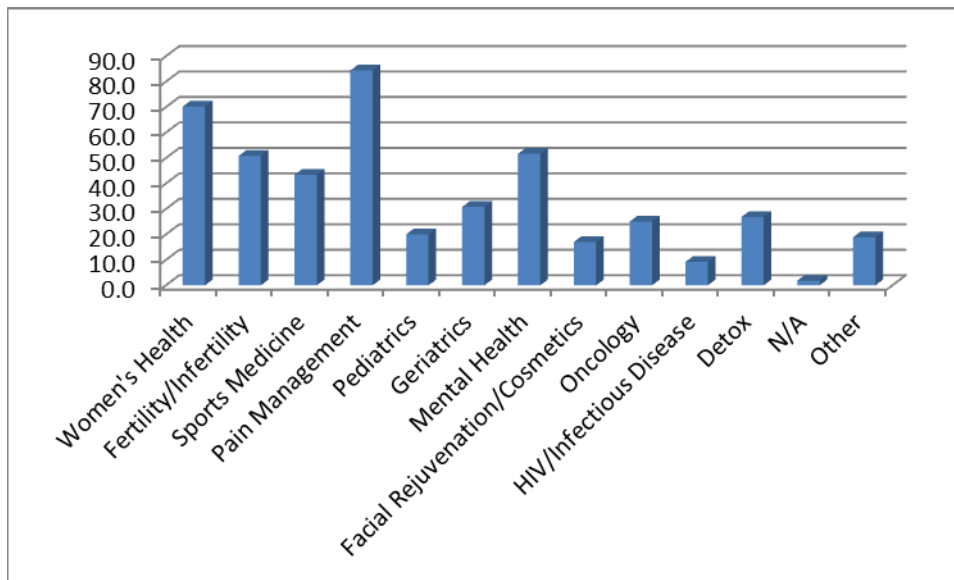
**Question 18: Check your areas of special interest.** (Check all that apply)

**N = 1423**

**Answers:**

Women's Health; Fertility/Infertility; Sports Medicine; Pain Management; Pediatrics; Geriatrics; Mental Health; Facial Rejuvenation/Cosmetics; Oncology; HIV/Infectious Disease; Detox; N/A; Other

Special Interest	Frequency	Valid Percent
Women's Health	999	70.2
Fertility/Infertility	723	50.8
Sports Medicine	617	43.4
Pain Management	1201	84.4
Pediatrics	285	20.0
Geriatrics	438	30.8
Mental Health	735	51.7
Facial Rejuvenation/Cosmetics	242	17.0
Oncology	356	25.0
HIV/Infectious Disease	131	9.2
Detox	382	26.8
N/A	26	1.8
Other	269	18.9



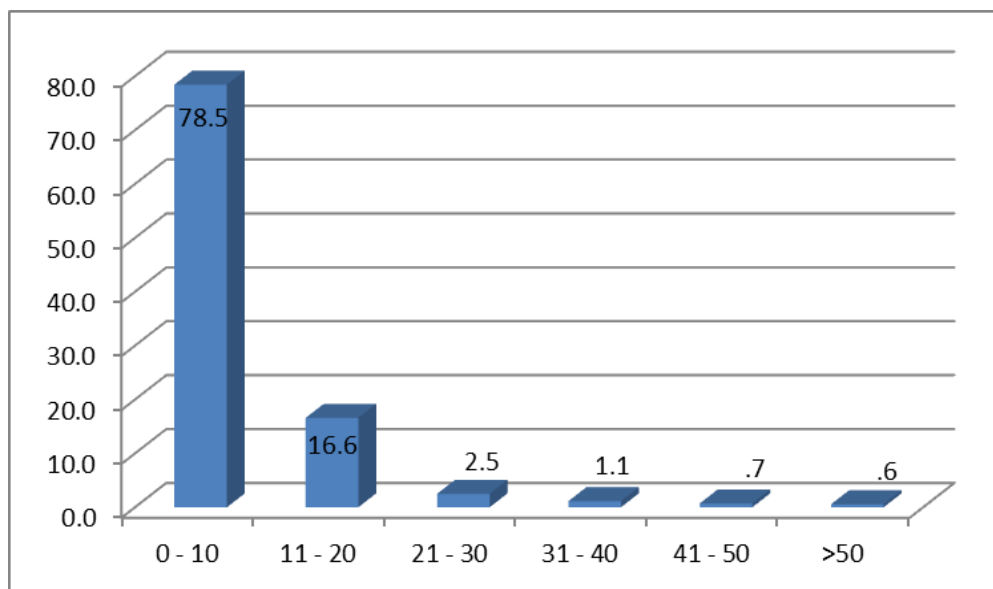


**Question 19: How many new patients do you see in a one-month period?**

**N = 1397**

**Responses:**

New Patients Per Month	Frequency	Valid Percent
0 – 10	1096	78.5
11 – 20	232	16.6
21 – 30	35	2.5
31 – 40	16	1.1
41 – 50	10	.7
>50	8	.6



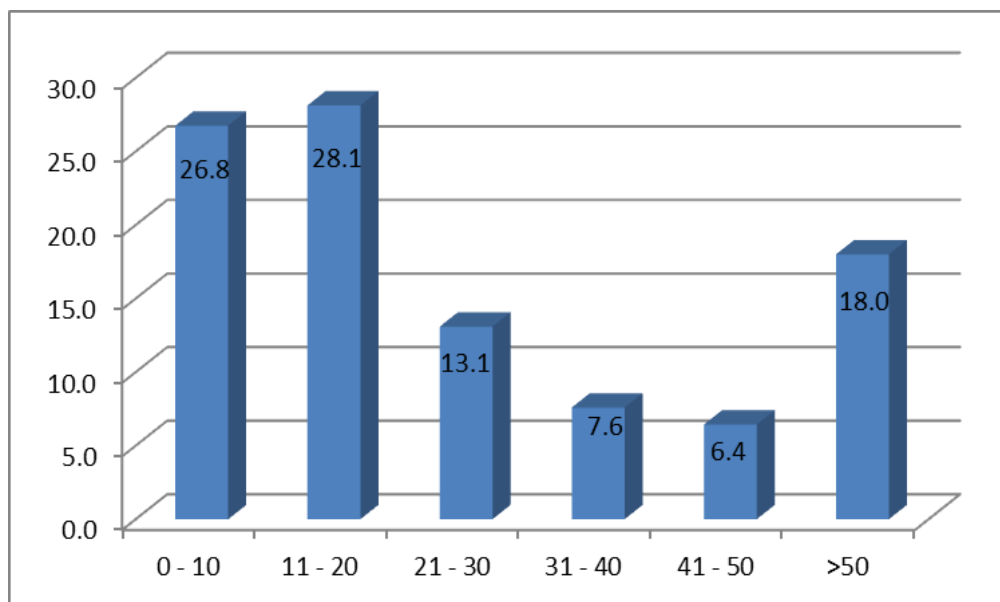


**Question 20: How many returning patients do you see in a one-month period?**

**N = 1383**

**Responses:**

Returning Patients Per Month	Frequency	Valid Percent
0 – 10	370	26.8
11 – 20	389	28.1
21 – 30	181	13.1
31 – 40	105	7.6
41 – 50	89	6.4
>50	249	18.0





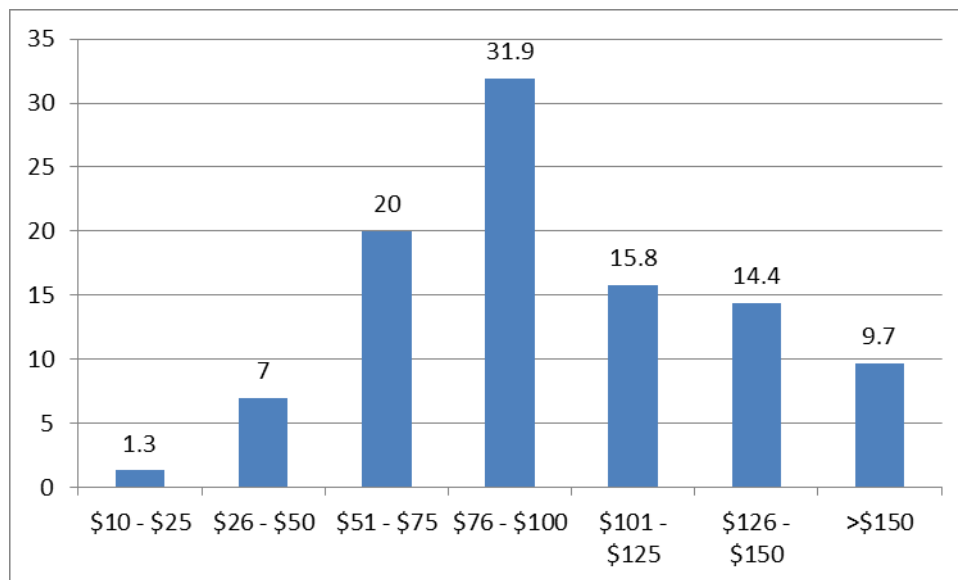
**Question 21: What is your average charge for a first visit?**

**N = 1358**

Median first charge was \$95.00

**Responses:**

Charge for 1st Visit	Frequency	Valid Percent
\$10 - \$25	18	1.3
\$26 - \$50	95	7.0
\$51 - \$75	271	20.0
\$76 - \$100	433	31.9
\$101 - \$125	214	15.8
\$126 - \$150	195	14.4
>\$150	132	9.7





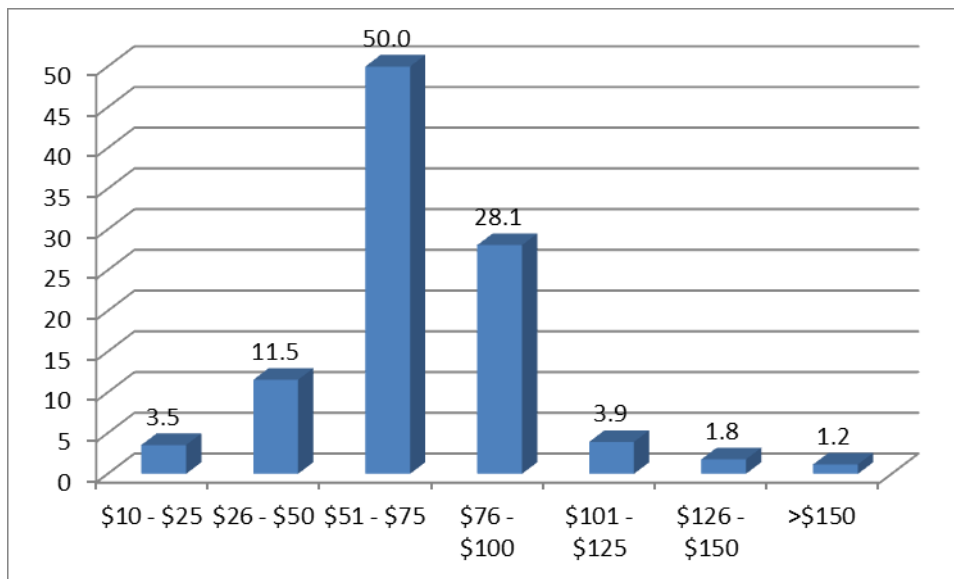
**Question 22: What is your average charge for a returning visit?**

**N = 1300**

Median returning fee was \$70.00

**Responses:**

Charge for returning visits	Frequency	Valid Percent
\$10 - \$25	46	3.5
\$26 - \$50	150	11.5
\$51 - \$75	650	50.0
\$76 - \$100	365	28.1
\$101 - \$125	51	3.9
\$126 - \$150	23	1.8
>\$150	15	1.2



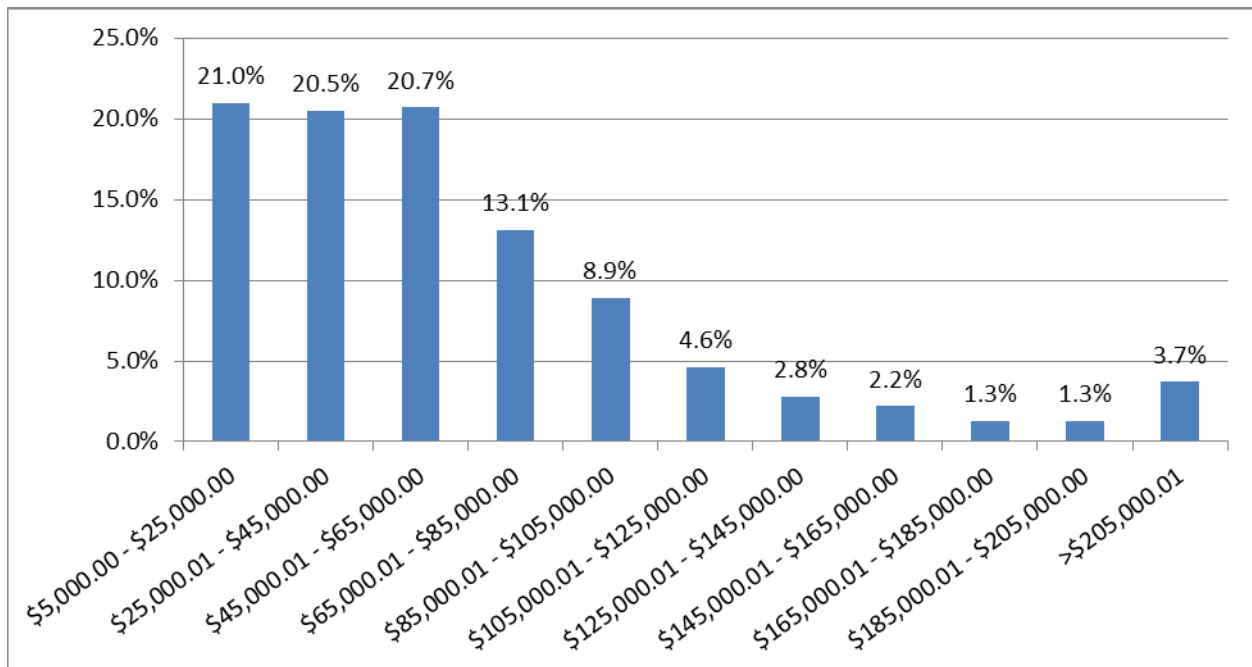


**Question 23: What was your total gross personal income before taxes last year?**

N = 1112\* (removed all values under \$5,000.00 and all values over \$450,000.00)

Median income was \$52,000.00

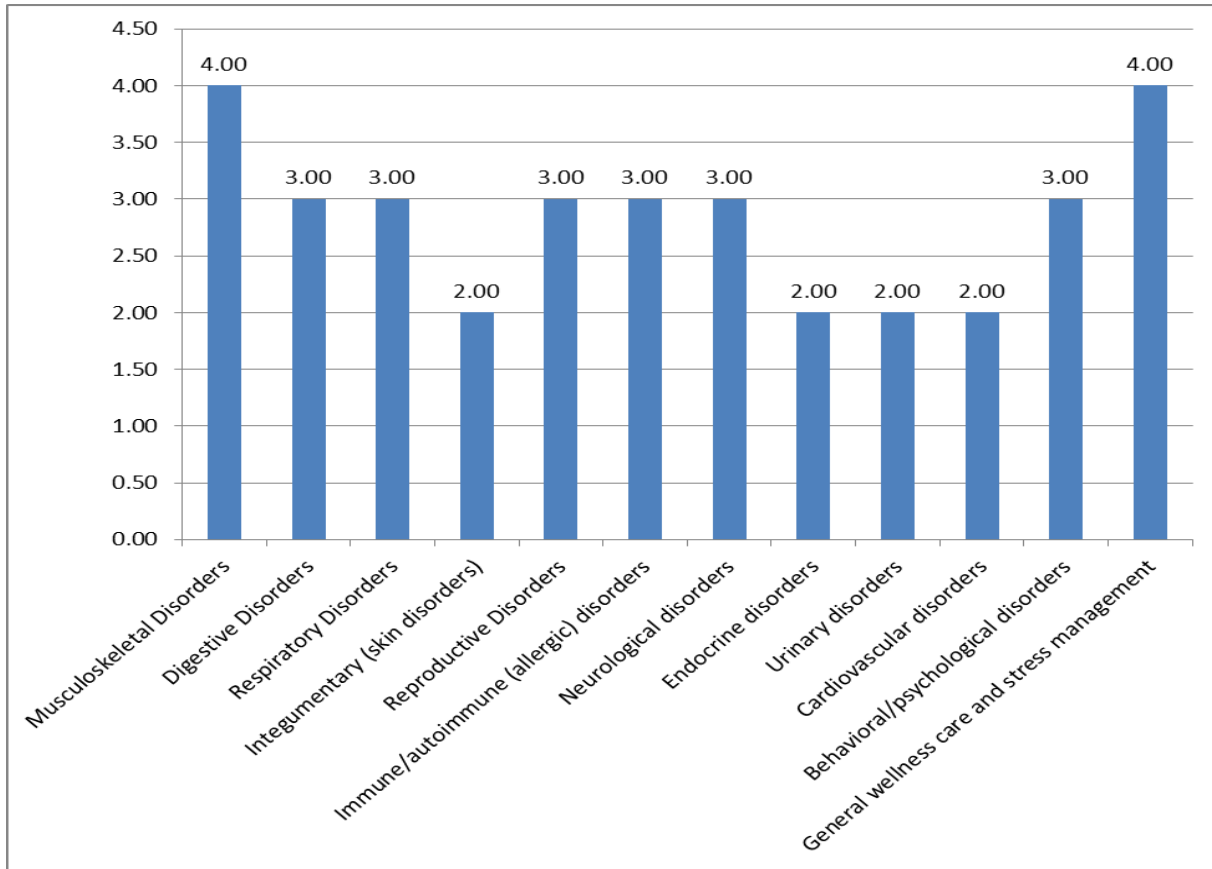
Gross Income Range	Frequency	Valid Percent
\$5,000.00 - \$25,000.00	234	21.0%
\$25,000.01 - \$45,000.00	228	20.5%
\$45,000.01 - \$65,000.00	230	20.7%
\$65,000.01 - \$85,000.00	146	13.1%
\$85,000.01 - \$105,000.00	99	8.9%
\$105,000.01 - \$125,000.00	51	4.6%
\$125,000.01 - \$145,000.00	31	2.8%
\$145,000.01 - \$165,000.00	24	2.2%
\$165,000.01 - \$185,000.00	14	1.3%
\$185,000.01 - \$205,000.00	14	1.3%
>\$205,000.01	41	3.7%





**Question 24:** *Using the following scale (1 to 5), please indicate the frequency of the following complaints from your patients:* 1 = Not at all; 2 = Not very commonly; 3 = Commonly; 4 = Very commonly; 5 = Exclusively.

Complaint	Valid Response	Median
Musculoskeletal disorders	1402	4.00
Digestive disorders	1395	3.00
Respiratory disorders	1388	3.00
Integumentary (skin disorders)	1382	2.00
Reproductive disorders	1383	3.00
Immune/autoimmune (allergic) disorders	1389	3.00
Neurological disorders	1389	3.00
Endocrine disorders	1380	2.00
Urinary disorders	1377	2.00
Cardiovascular disorders	1374	2.00
Behavioral/psychological disorders	1381	3.00
General wellness care and stress management	1383	4.00



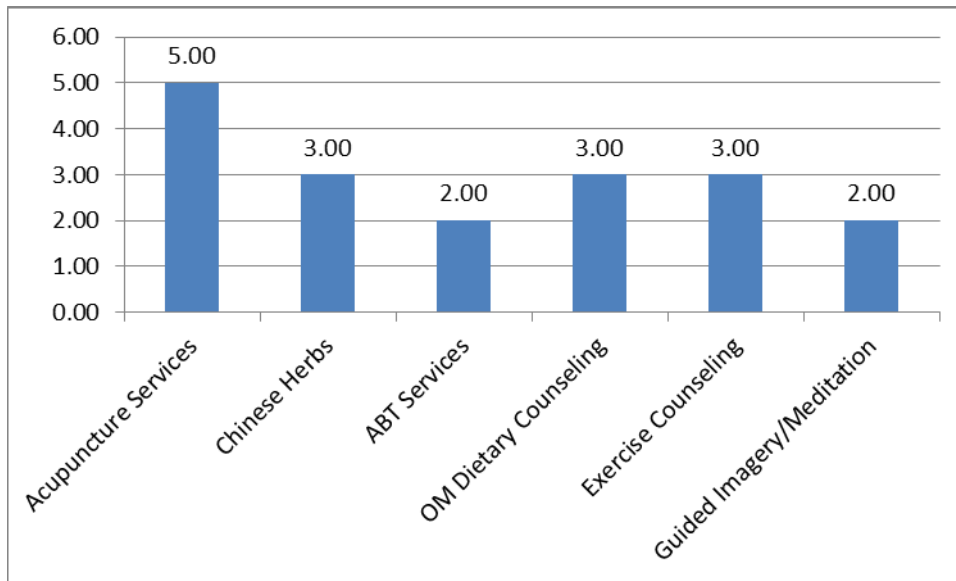




**Question 25: In a typical month, to what percentage of patients do you provide the following services?** Please indicate the percentage using the following scale (indicate all that apply):

1 = Never; 2 = Less than 25%; 3 = 26% to 50%; 4 = 51% to 75%; 5 = 76% to 100%.

Services	Valid Response	Median Frequency
<b>Acupuncture Services</b>	1399	5.00
<b>Chinese Herbs</b>	1370	3.00
<b>ABT Services</b>	1315	2.00
<b>OM Dietary Counseling</b>	1360	3.00
<b>Exercise Counseling</b>	1344	3.00
<b>Guided Imagery/Meditation</b>	1317	2.00



### Summary

This Executive Summary captures updated data points that were benchmarked in the 2008 JA study, as well as provides new benchmark data points that have not been collected previously with this AOM population.

Overall, it appears that AOM practitioners are working more frequently in different practice settings other than as a sole proprietor as previous surveys demonstrated. They have also made some gains in income, although roughly a third of the respondents state that they “prefer to work part-time”, as opposed



to “full-time” (greater than 30 hours per week). The gender, ethnicity and practice setting locations remain similar to those identified in the [2008 JA study](#).

According to this report, it appears that the type of practice settings are becoming more diverse. This report provides the reader with more detail on how acupuncturists get paid by their patients and how they are paid overall for their services (as a sole practitioner, independent contractor, employee, etc.).

The NCCAOM hopes that AOM practitioners will use this data to inform their own practice. For example, they can use the payment or income information on what to charge new patients and returning patients. It is also the desire of the NCCAOM to continue to use this data to inform policy makers, legislators and educators about the demographic and clinical practice profile of AOM practitioners.

The NCCAOM will continue to track the growth and shifts in the AOM workforce. Data collected from this periodic survey is consistent with the outcomes data from the ongoing convenience sample of NCCAOM Diplomates, who recertify annually with the NCCAOM.

The NCCAOM welcomes comments and suggestions on this Executive Summary. Please contact Dr. Kory Ward-Cook, CEO NCCAOM at [kwardcook@thenccaom.org](mailto:kwardcook@thenccaom.org) if you have any questions about this report.