

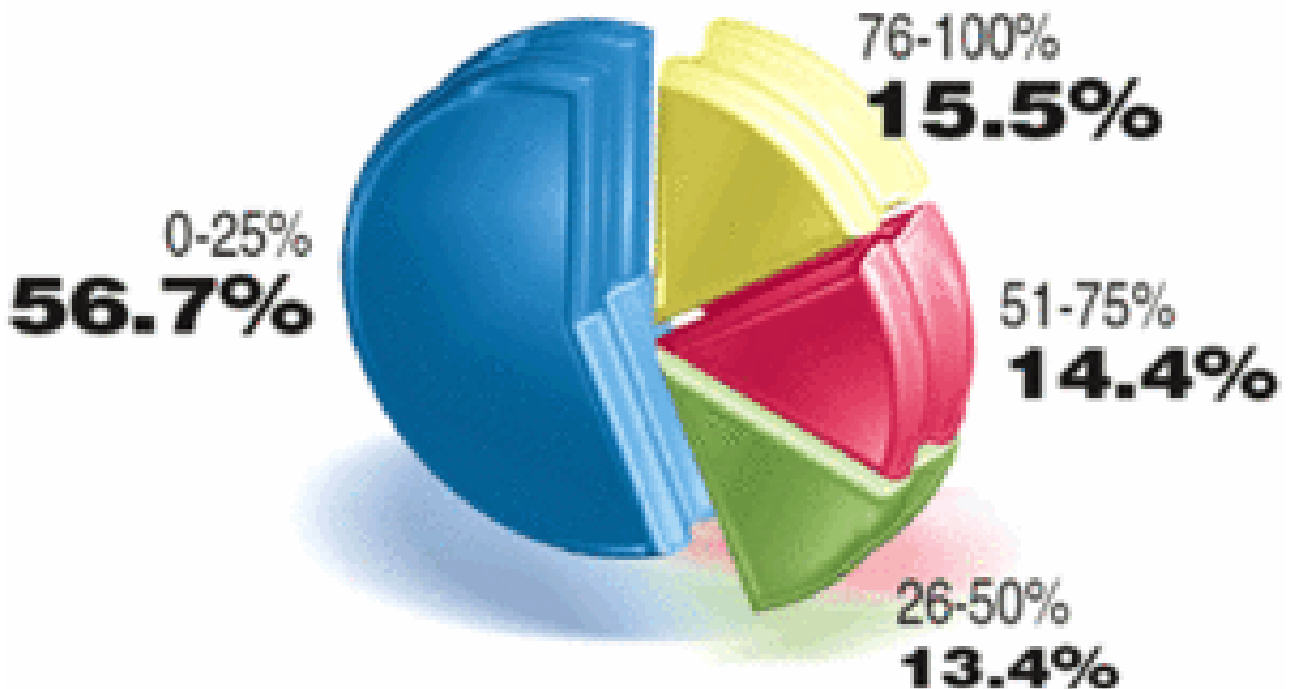
## Acupuncture Poll

Editorial Staff

The Acupuncture Poll's question for December 2002 was:

"What percentage of your practice consists of patients covered by insurance or another health plan?"

Results are as follows:



These results are based upon 97 responses. As this is a voluntary, non-scientific survey, caution should be used in generalizing the results. Here is a sample of the comments made by those who took the survey and how they voted:

0-25%: I have mixed feelings about accepting insurance patients into my practice, something I have done for three of my five years in practice. Having an insurer which offers acupuncture as a covered benefit does make it easier financially for patients to obtain the recommended number of treatments needed for their condition. However, the paperwork involved in filing claims, checking insurance coverage and status, follow-up calls on filed claims which have not been paid, etc. has made my life and that of my receptionist's more difficult. And when the insurance companies change their contract with me without notice, lowering the agreed-to reimbursement amounts, or suddenly deciding the provider must now also offer a 15% discount to certain patients in addition to accepting the lowered agreed fee, it does not seem right. I sometimes wonder if all the extra work is worth it.

26-50%: I am a physician acupuncturist. When I began acupuncture training six years ago, I loved the practice of Oriental medicine without the constraints of HMO/PPO/insurance "handcuffs" on patient care. Now that "conventional" medicine has sought to integrate complementary therapies, I fear that the process of integration will destroy the essence of the Oriental medical approach to patient care as well as the "holistic" role of the practitioner. It is indeed a two-edged sword: recognition of the healing art of acupuncture by insurance coverage makes it available to many more people, but may eventually lead to the same "drive-by" or "assembly line" medicine that so many of us have come to know and hate.

51-75%: This varies. Sometimes business is predominantly cash. Other times it is predominantly insurance. I am not a network provider for an insurance company.

0-25%: The less involvement that I have with insurance, the simpler my life stays, and the more time I have to dedicate to the practice that I love.

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For more information on the Acupuncture Poll, contact *Acupuncture Today* at [editorial@acupuncturetoday.com](mailto:editorial@acupuncturetoday.com).

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