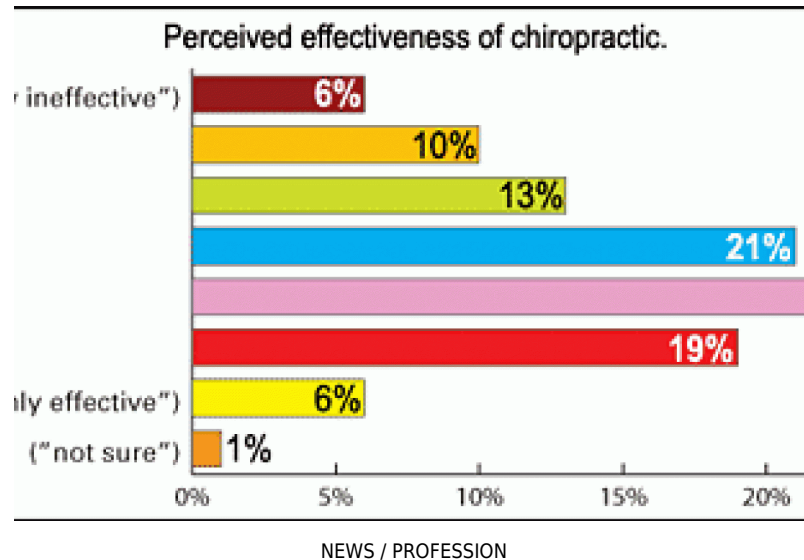


Dynamic Chiropractic



MDs Split on Alternative Medicine's Overall Impact

HALF CONSIDER CHIROPRACTIC EFFECTIVE TO SOME DEGREE

Michael Devitt

According to a new survey, almost half of all physicians consider chiropractic one of the most effective forms of complementary and alternative medicine currently practiced in the United States. The survey also reveals deep divisions concerning the perceived impact of CAM on the quality of health care in the U.S. Despite these beliefs, a majority of doctors have recommended some form of alternative medicine to their patients in the past, and an equal number feel the National Institutes of Health should continue to fund research on alternative medicine.

The 31-question survey was conducted in September 2005 by HCD Research, a New Jersey-based marketing and research firm, and the New York-based Louis Finkelstein Institute. A total of 873 physicians participated in the survey.

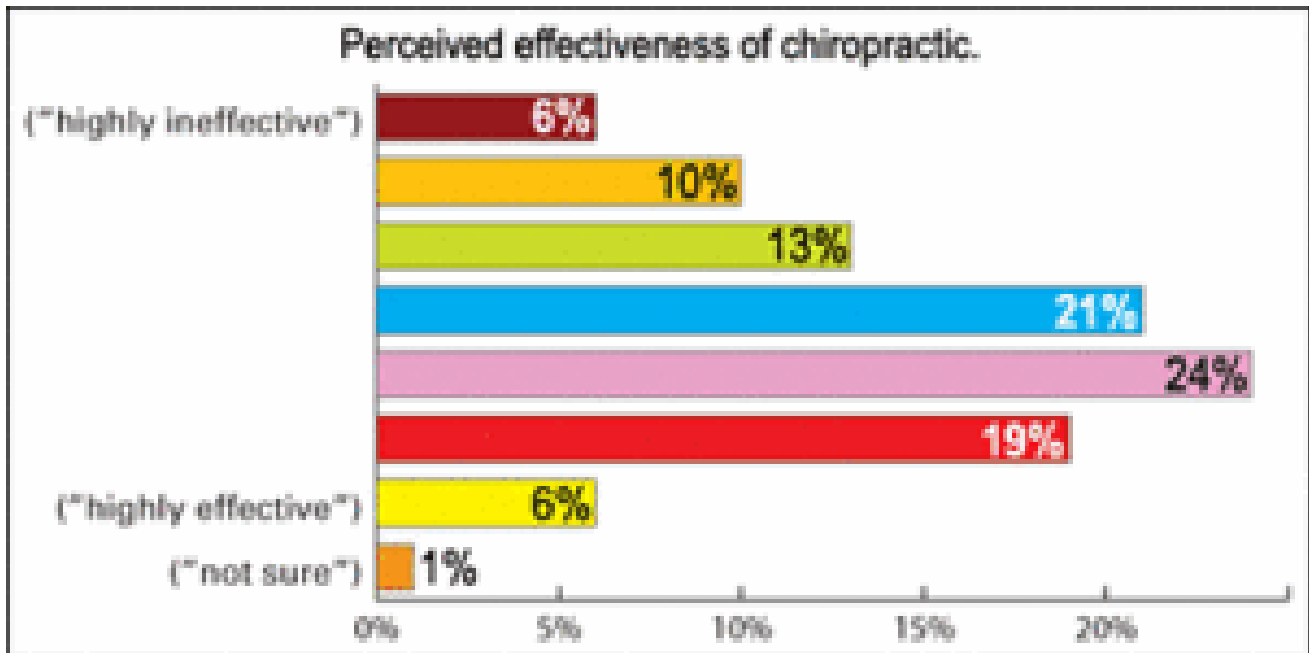
In addition to questions on the overall effect of alternative medicine on American health care, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of 12 forms of CAM (chiropractic, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, aromatherapy, biofield therapies, dietary supplements, electromagnetic field therapies, homeopathy, hypnosis, massage therapy, mind-body interventions, and naturopathy) from two perspectives: both as a stand-alone therapy, and when used as a complement to conventional medical treatment. Each form of CAM was rated on a seven-point scale (7 being "highly effective").

Results

In terms of individual therapies, chiropractic received the third-highest rating of any CAM therapy in the survey. Forty-nine percent of those surveyed believe chiropractic to be effective to some extent, including 6 percent who thought it was "highly effective." Acupuncture and massage therapy ranked first and second at 60 percent and 58 percent, respectively. Aromatherapy ranked last, as only 10

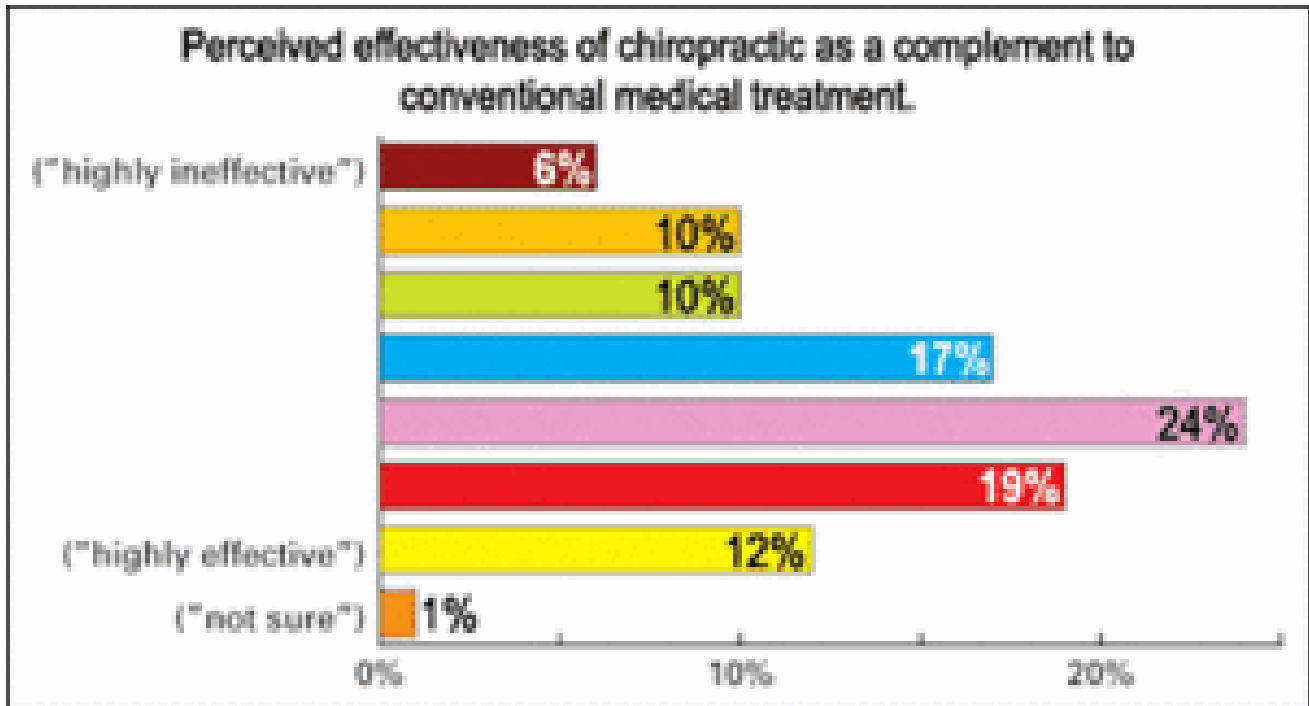
percent of the physicians indicated that they thought it was effective.

When evaluated as a complement to conventional medical treatments, chiropractic finished third behind acupuncture and massage therapy; 55 percent of the physicians believe it to be effective to some degree. Twelve percent of the respondents thought it was a "highly effective" complement to conventional medicine.



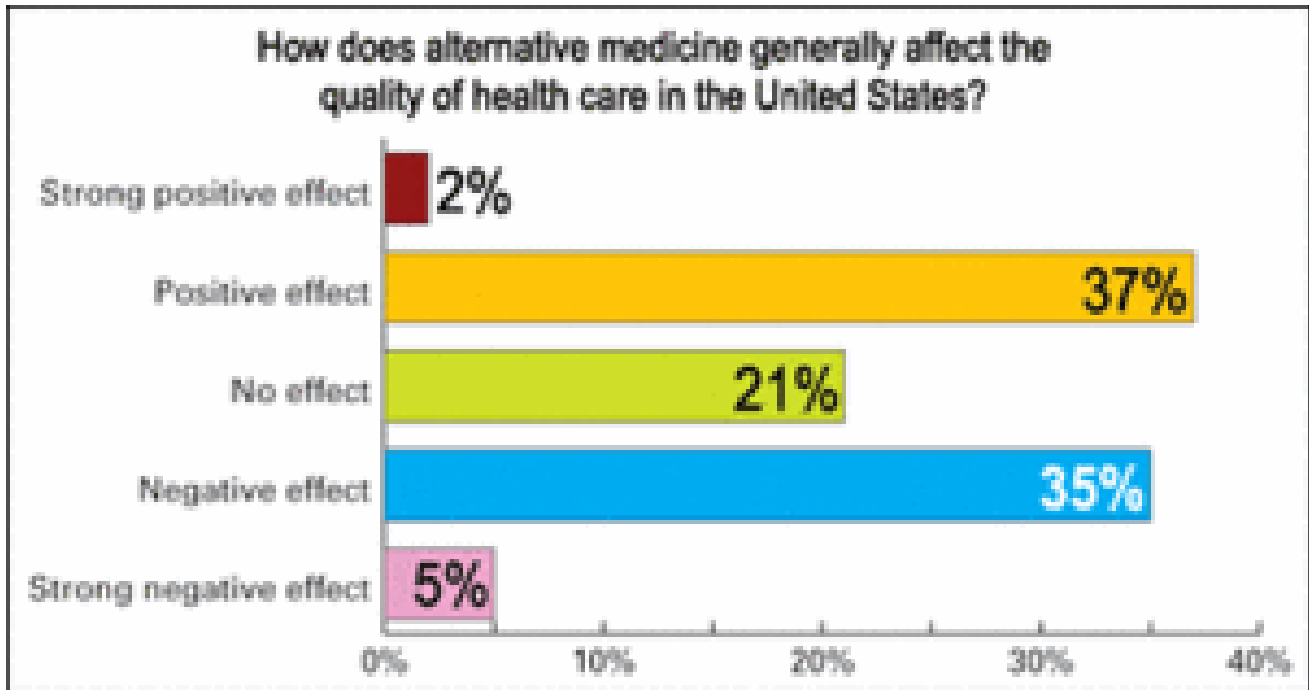
Physicians were almost equally divided in their beliefs on alternative medicine. While 39 percent believe alternative medicine has a positive effect on the quality of health care in the U.S., 40 percent believe it has a negative effect; the remainder thought alternative medicine has no effect on the quality of health care.

A slight majority of physicians believe alternative medicine to be beneficial to their patients. Fifty-one percent stated that alternative medicine is "usually helpful" or "helpful to patients in some circumstances." However, 28 percent believe alternative medicine could be harmful to some degree, and another 15 percent attributed the helpful effects of alternative medicine to the placebo effect.



Despite these strong sentiments, most physicians appear comfortable recommending alternative medicine to their patients. In fact, 65 percent of the respondents report recommending alternative medicine as a complement to their medical treatment at some time, and 63 percent responded in the affirmative when asked, "Are there any conditions under which you would advise a patient to use complementary medicine?"

A majority of physicians also supported federal funding for complementary and alternative medicine research. When asked if the establishment of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine was a positive or negative development, 53 percent believe it was positive; only 15 percent replied that it was a negative development. Similarly, most physicians (65 percent) feel that the National Institutes of Health should fund CAM research; only 20 percent felt the NIH should not.



In an accompanying press release, executives from The Finkelstein Institute and HCD elaborated on the survey results, indicating that CAM should not be lumped into one broad category. Rather, each of the therapies that comprise what is considered complementary and alternative medicine - whether they be "useful complements" or other modalities that "remain on the fringe" - should be evaluated individually.

"The one trait that all complementary and alternative therapies share is the fact that they are not conventionally used," observed Glenn Kessler, a co-founder and managing partner at HCD Research. "However, they are not all the same, and as we see in this study, physicians clearly recognize that each therapy must be judged on its own merits."

"The message here is that techniques which have made it into the mainstream, are recognized by physicians as useful complements to scientific medicine," added Dr. Alan Mittleman, director of The Finkelstein Institute. "Other therapies remain on the fringe and are viewed with suspicion. Nonetheless, physicians seem willing to let their patients - and future research - decide what has credibility and what doesn't."

Resources

1. *Physician Survey on Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. Results released in September 2005.
2. Allopathic doctors divided on benefits and advantages of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). NewsTarget press release, Sept. 22, 2005.
3. Physicians divided on impact of CAM on U.S. health care. Healthy News Service press release, Sept. 29, 2005.

DECEMBER 2005