



## Global Views

## Distribution of licensed acupuncturists and educational institutions in the United States in early 2015

Arthur Yin Fan<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Sarah Faggert<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup> McLean Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, PLC, Vienna, VA 22182, USA<sup>b</sup> American Traditional Chinese Medicine Association, Vienna, VA 22182, USA

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 1 June 2017

Accepted 14 August 2017

Available online 12 December 2017

## Keywords:

Acupuncturist

Acupuncture educational institution

Acupuncture regulation

Oriental medicine

United States

## ABSTRACT

In recent decades, acupuncture has been used more widely and extensively in the United States (U.S.). However, there have been no national surveys or analyses reported in academic journals on the number of practicing or licensed acupuncturists. This study was conducted to identify the approximate number of licensed acupuncturists active in 2015. The Board of Acupuncture or Board of Medicine in each state or U.S. territory was contacted to collect data. Online license information searching was also performed in order to get accurate numbers of licensed acupuncturists for those states in which a board was unable to be contacted. The study found that the number of licensed acupuncturists in 2015 in the U.S. was 34,481. Of this, more than 50% were licensed in three states alone: California (32.39%), New York (11.89%) and Florida (7.06%). The number of licensed acupuncturists increased 23.30% and 52.09%, compared to the year 2009 ( $n = 27,965$ ) and 2004 ( $n = 22,671$ ), respectively; increasing about 1,266 per year. There were 62 and 10 accredited acupuncture institutions providing master and doctoral degrees, respectively. The West Coast comprised 51.39% of degree granting programs, while the East Coast comprised 29.17%; together the coastal states housed more than 80% of all programs, with the remainder sprinkled across the southern (9.72%), northern (8.33%), and the middle/central states (1.39%). Forty-four states and the District of Columbia regulated acupuncture practice by law at the time of data collection. Acupuncture continues to be a quickly growing profession in the U.S.

Fan AY, Faggert S. Distribution of licensed acupuncturists and educational institutions in the United States in early 2015. *J Integr Med.* 2018; 16(1): 1–5

© 2017 Shanghai Changhai Hospital. Published by Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Acupuncture, as an important component of Chinese medicine (CM), was formally introduced in the United States (U.S.) in 1972. Two of the first states to have acupuncture or Oriental medicine (AOM)-licensing laws were Nevada and Oregon; CM falls under—and is often used synonymously with—this classification. There are now many licensed acupuncturists and doctors of acupuncture and/or Oriental medicine in the U.S. The first schools of AOM were Taoist Studies, New England School of Acupuncture and California Acupuncture College [1–11].

In an analysis published in 2007, the National Health Interview Survey found that over 6% (or 14 million) of Americans were using or have used acupuncture as a part of their health care regimen. However, only around 8 million Americans utilized acupuncture in 2002 [12]. Multiple resources have shown that this number

has only continued to increase over the past ten years. Today, acupuncturists are one of the many important healthcare providers at various reputable medical establishments [13–16]. In recent years, with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, more than 54 million Americans have received acupuncture coverage under the Essential Healthcare Benefit [17]. On June 1, 2016, the governor of Kansas signed the Acupuncture Practice Act into the law, making Kansas the 47th state to have acupuncture regulation (Alabama, Wyoming, Oklahoma and South Dakota are the four remaining states that do not license acupuncturists) [18]. On July 22, 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor issued a Standard Occupational Classification code for acupuncturists [19]. With more and more people turning to acupuncture as an integrative therapy to their traditional healthcare, or even as a partial replacement for their previous healthcare, the number of actual AOM practitioners in the U.S., along with statistics on the number of accredited schools and programs from which these practitioners emerge in each state is of increasing interest. There was no published survey or analysis reported in academic journals regarding the actual number of acupuncturists, even though acupuncture has been used

\* Corresponding author at: McLean Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, PLC, Vienna, VA 22182, USA.

E-mail address: [ArthurFan@ChineseMedicineDoctor.US](mailto:ArthurFan@ChineseMedicineDoctor.US) (A.Y. Fan).

more and more widely and extensively in the U.S. in recent decades [12–22]. Our investigation aimed to find as accurate a number as possible for the number of licensed acupuncturists, as well as the number of accredited programs and schools in each state of the U.S.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Inclusion criteria

For finding the number of acupuncturists, the numbers of licensed acupuncturists in the states with AOM-licensing laws were included in this investigation. The numbers represent the information as of January 1, 2015.

The number of education programs for acupuncture and Oriental medicine included active and accredited programs providing masters, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education [23]. The numbers represent the information as of January 1, 2015.

### 2.2. Exclusion criteria

The investigation excluded acupuncturists who have retired, moved or no longer renewed their license with state boards, as well as active acupuncturists practicing in states without AOM-licensing laws, as of January 1, 2015. Exclusions were made based on state records showing that the practitioner was retired or located in a state without licensing laws.

The investigation also excluded any inactive schools of AOM which closed due to various reasons before January 1, 2015.

### 2.3. Methods

#### 2.3.1. The statistics of acupuncturists

A search was first conducted of publicly available records accessible from the internet to find the number of licensed acupuncturists in each state. This number was then verified by calling the corresponding board of acupuncture or board of medicine for each of the U.S. state, as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Discrepancies were resolved by staffs who maintain the acupuncture-licensing databases for each state or territory; we adopted these data validated. If there was online information available, and a clerk could not be reached, then the number found from online information sources was used. If there was no online information available, and the clerks could be reached, the information from clerks provided was used. In cases where no information was available online and a clerk could not be reached, we report that the “information is not available.”

To determine numbers of acupuncturists from previous years in the U.S., we searched PubMed.gov (MEDLINE), scholar.google.com and google.com, using the following search words: “acupuncturist”, “acupuncture practitioner,” “licensed acupuncturist,” “number,” “statistics” and “U.S.”

#### 2.3.2. The statistics of schools or programs in acupuncture and Oriental medicine

To identify acupuncture and Oriental medicine schools or programs, searches were conducted from google.com and used the following search words: “acupuncture,” “Oriental medicine,” “acupuncture and Oriental medicine,” “complementary and alternative medicine,” “integrative medicine,” “school,” “program” and “U.S.”

#### 2.3.3. The investigation timing

This study was conducted in February, 2015.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Acupuncturist numbers in each state

There were 22 states that had online information about the number of licensed acupuncturists; among them, three state board clerks in charge acupuncture licensing could not be reached by phone. For those three states, the unverified data were used. For all other states or territories, whether they had online data information or not, the number provided by the clerks was used for the study. There was no state for which no data were available.

There were a total of 34,682 practicing acupuncturists in the U.S. at the beginning of 2015. This number included 34,481 licensed acupuncturists practicing in 44 states and Washington, D.C. and 201 unlicensed acupuncturists practicing in the 6 states without acupuncture licensing law at that time (Alabama, Kansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming) as well as in Guam, Puerto Rico and Virgin Island (Table 1). The nine states with the largest number of acupuncturists included California, New York, Florida, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Massachusetts and Maryland. The number of practitioners was more than 1,000 for each of these states. There were 24,954 licensed acupuncturists in these nine states, representing 72.36% of all U.S. licensed acupuncturists. Among them, the largest three were California (32.39%), New York (11.89%) and Florida (7.06%) which represented over half of all practicing acupuncturists at 51.34% (Table 2).

It should be noted that five states license acupuncturists at the doctor or physician level, such as in Nevada and New Mexico, in which the licensed acupuncture and Oriental medicine professional get the title of Doctor of Oriental Medicine (OMD or DOM). In Rhode Island and Utah, a licensed acupuncture professional's title is Doctor of Acupuncture (DAC); in Florida, licensed acupuncture professional's title is Acupuncture Physician. In California, licensed acupuncturists have been treated as primary care physicians when they provide services for Medi-Cal (a program similar to Medicaid, which is for low-income patients in other states). However, all of these titles refer to those practitioners who received licensure in acupuncture from their state. In general these practitioners are called Licensed Acupuncturists (LAc) and a majority of states give this title. This title is also used by insurance companies to refer to those who solely provide acupuncture and/or Oriental medicine through an acupuncture license. As an occupation, the U.S. Department of Labor recognizes this profession as “Acupuncturists” [19]. In Louisiana, the Acupuncturist title was originally only for Western physicians who learned acupuncture through short-term training in acupuncture. In other states these physicians would be called Medical Acupuncturists or Physician Acupuncturists, while licensed traditional acupuncturists were called Acupuncture Assistants. Current regulation has changed the titles to Physician Acupuncturist and Licensed Acupuncturist, respectively [24].

### 3.2. Comparison of the numbers in history

Records of numbers of practicing acupuncturists from 1992 to 2004 were published on the webpage of the National Acupuncture Foundation [21]. There were also records of acupuncturists listed by the People's Organization of Community Acupuncture in 2007 and 2009 [22]. Over the past 23 years, the number of practicing acupuncturists increased steadily. In 1992 there were 5,525, while in early of 2015 the number increased to 34,481, a 6.24-fold increase. Compared to the number of 2004 (22,671), the number of licensed acupuncturists increased 52.09%; compared to the number of 2009 (27,965), the number of licensed acupuncturists

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8693243>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8693243>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)