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Utilization of Selected Medical Practitioners: United States, 1974¹

Some ambulatory medical care is provided each year by a wide variety of nonphysician health care personnel, referred to in this report as "medical practitioners."^{2,3} This report presents estimates from the 1974 Health Interview Survey on the number and percent of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population who consulted a chiropractor, a podiatrist/chiroprapist, or physical therapist during a 12-month reference period. Further details on the survey design are given in the Technical Notes.

Data on the use of chiropractors and podiatrists were collected previously in the Health Interview Survey during 1963-64. (See footnote 2.) It should be noted, however, that the data from these two surveys are not strictly comparable. Different questions were used in each survey period. Moreover, the 1963-64 questions were asked on a household basis for each household member, and proxy responses as well as self-responses were accepted. The 1974 items

were asked on a self-respondent basis. In addition, the 1963-64 questions were asked as part of a special supplement on medical specialists and practitioners. The 1974 items were asked as part of a special supplement on sources of and barriers to medical care.

According to responses to a special question in the 1974 Health Interview Survey on medical practitioners, an estimated 3.6 percent of the population (7.5 million persons) used the services of a chiropractor; 2.4 percent (5.0 million persons) consulted a podiatrist or a chiroprapist; and 1.6 percent (3.2 million persons) used the services of a physical therapist. (See chart on page 2.) Contact with each of these practitioners was, with some exceptions, proportionately more prevalent among older and white persons than it was among younger persons and persons in all other color groups. A more detailed discussion on the use of these medical practitioners among various groupings of the population is given.

USE OF CHIROPRACTORS

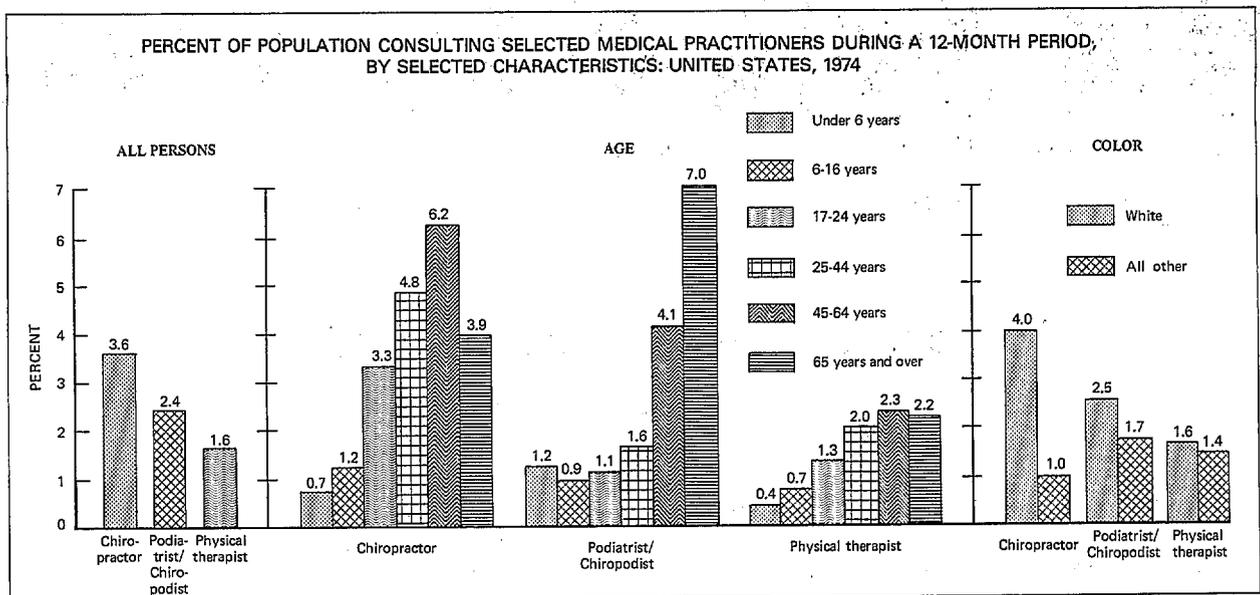
An estimated 3.6 percent of the population consulted a chiropractor at least once during the 12 months preceding the interview (table 1). There was some variation in the use of chiropractors among the various categories of the population, ranging from 0.7 percent for children under 6 years of age to 6.6 percent for farm residents.

Among persons under 65 years of age, the likelihood of consulting a chiropractor was

¹This report prepared by Lonnie Jean Howie, Division of Health Interview Statistics.

²National Center for Health Statistics: Characteristics of patients of selected types of medical specialists and practitioners, United States, July 1963-June 1964. *Vital and Health Statistics*. PHS Pub. No. 1000-Series 10-No. 28. Public Health Service. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1966.

³Schach, E., Kalimo, E., and Crawford, J.: Use of selected nonphysician health care personnel services, in R. Kohn and K. L. White, eds., *Health Care: An International Study*. New York. Oxford University Press, 1976. pp. 329-350.



greater for each older age group. During the survey year 0.7 percent of children under 6 years of age and 6.2 percent of adults aged 45 to 64 years consulted a chiropractor. However, the utilization rate drops to 3.9 percent for persons 65 years of age and over.

Use of chiropractors was greater among white persons (4.0 percent) than among persons in all other color groups (1.0 percent). Proportionately, for families with an annual income of less than \$15,000, there was a tendency for utilization to increase as family income increased. The rate decreased to 3.5 percent for families with higher incomes, which is similar to the proportion for all persons. Contact with a chiropractor was also greater among persons living in the West (5.0 percent) and North Central Regions (4.2 percent) than among persons living in the other geographic regions. Contact with a chiropractor was more prevalent among persons residing outside standard metropolitan statistical areas (5.1 percent) than among persons living within such areas (3.0 percent). Within standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA's), central city dwellers consulted a chiropractor less often (2.4 percent) than did SMSA residents outside the central city (3.4 percent). Outside SMSA's the percent of persons who received services from a chiropractor during the survey year was

higher among residents in farm areas (6.6 percent) than among residents in nonfarm areas (4.9 percent).

Differences also occurred among usual activity status groupings, with proportionately more persons who were working, keeping house, or retired than persons in the other activity status groupings seeing a chiropractor (table 1).

Whereas the overall estimate of percents for males is slightly higher than that for females, the differences can be accounted for by sampling variability, as is the case with the differences by sex for the selected sociodemographic variables.

USE OF PODIATRISTS

An estimated 2.4 percent of the population saw a podiatrist at least once during the 12 months preceding the interview (table 2). As few as 0.8 percent of persons living in farm areas outside of SMSA's and as many as 7.0 percent of persons 65 years and over consulted a podiatrist during the 12-month reference period. Proportionately more white persons (2.5 percent) saw a podiatrist than did persons in all other color groups (1.7 percent).

The use of podiatrists also varied somewhat among age, sex, family income, usual activity

Table 1. Number and percent of persons who received services from a chiropractor during the year preceding time of interview, by sex and selected characteristics: United States, 1974

Characteristic	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
	Number of persons who received service in thousands			Percent of persons who received service		
All persons ¹ -----	7,527	3,811	3,715	3.6	3.8	3.5
<u>Age</u>						
Under 6 years-----	130	69	61	0.7	0.7	0.6
6-16 years-----	533	336	197	1.2	1.5	0.9
17-24 years-----	966	478	488	3.3	3.4	3.2
25-44 years-----	2,345	1,229	1,206	4.8	5.0	4.6
45-64 years-----	2,650	1,326	1,325	6.2	6.5	5.9
65 years and over-----	812	374	438	3.9	4.4	3.6
<u>Color</u>						
White-----	7,252	3,680	3,572	4.0	4.2	3.8
All other-----	275	132	143	1.0	1.1	1.0
<u>Family income</u>						
Less than \$2,000-----	208	52	156	2.8	2.0	3.3
\$2,000-\$3,999-----	506	192	314	3.1	3.0	3.2
\$4,000-\$6,999-----	1,064	504	559	3.7	3.7	3.6
\$7,000-\$9,999-----	1,086	494	592	4.0	3.7	4.3
\$10,000-\$14,999-----	2,115	1,111	1,005	4.1	4.2	4.0
\$15,000 or more-----	2,229	1,303	927	3.5	4.1	3.0
<u>Usual activity status²</u>						
Going to school-----	837	486	352	1.6	1.8	1.3
Working-----	4,058	2,669	1,389	5.1	5.3	4.8
Keeping house-----	1,856	...	1,856	4.7	...	4.7
Retired-----	497	482	15	5.3	5.6	2.0
Other-----	148	105	43	2.8	3.3	2.1
<u>Geographic region</u>						
Northeast-----	1,645	837	808	3.3	3.6	3.1
North Central-----	2,353	1,156	1,198	4.2	4.3	4.2
South-----	1,657	818	839	2.5	2.6	2.5
West-----	1,871	1,001	870	5.0	5.5	4.5
<u>Place of residence</u>						
SMSA-----	4,266	2,189	2,078	3.0	3.2	2.8
Central city-----	1,531	794	737	2.4	2.7	2.2
Outside central city-----	2,735	1,394	1,341	3.4	3.6	3.2
Outside SMSA-----	3,260	1,623	1,638	5.1	5.1	5.0
Nonfarm-----	2,760	1,340	1,419	4.9	4.8	4.9
Farm-----	500	282	218	6.6	7.2	6.0

¹Includes unknown income.

²Excludes children under 6 years of age.

Table 2. Number and percent of persons who received services from a podiatrist during the year preceding time of interview, by sex and selected characteristics: United States, 1974

Characteristic	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
	Number of persons who received service in thousands			Percent of persons who received service		
All persons ¹ -----	4,978	1,629	3,349	2.4	1.6	3.1
<u>Age</u>						
Under 6 years-----	239	127	112	1.2	1.3	1.2
6-16 years-----	339	208	191	0.9	1.0	0.9
17-24 years-----	330	153	177	1.1	1.1	1.2
25-44 years-----	801	304	498	1.6	1.2	1.9
45-64 years-----	1,747	463	1,285	4.1	2.3	5.7
65 years and over-----	1,460	373	1,087	7.0	4.3	8.9
<u>Color</u>						
White-----	4,526	1,460	3,066	2.5	1.7	3.3
All other-----	452	170	283	1.7	1.4	2.0
<u>Family income</u>						
Less than \$2,000-----	205	44	160	2.8	1.7	3.4
\$2,000-\$3,999-----	468	81	387	2.9	1.3	3.9
\$4,000-\$6,999-----	728	254	474	2.5	1.9	3.1
\$7,000-\$9,999-----	551	207	344	2.0	1.6	2.5
\$10,000-\$14,999-----	988	401	587	1.9	1.5	2.3
\$15,000 or more-----	1,688	578	1,110	2.7	1.8	3.6
<u>Usual activity status²</u>						
Going to school-----	489	241	248	0.9	0.9	0.9
Working-----	1,902	854	1,048	2.4	1.7	3.6
Keeping house-----	1,747	...	1,747	4.4	...	4.4
Retired-----	425	335	90	4.5	3.9	12.0
Other-----	176	71	105	3.4	2.2	5.2
<u>Geographic region</u>						
Northeast-----	1,932	559	1,373	3.9	2.4	5.3
North Central-----	1,429	528	901	2.6	2.0	3.2
South-----	863	317	547	1.3	1.0	1.6
West-----	754	225	529	2.0	1.2	2.8
<u>Place of residence</u>						
SMSA-----	3,988	1,230	2,758	2.8	1.8	3.7
Central city-----	1,960	590	1,370	3.1	2.0	4.1
Outside central city-----	2,029	640	1,388	2.5	1.6	3.4
Outside SMSA-----	990	399	591	1.5	1.3	1.8
Nonfarm-----	931	377	554	1.6	1.4	1.9
Farm-----	59	22	37	0.8	0.6	1.0

¹Includes unknown income.

²Excludes children under 6 years of age.

status, place of residence, and geographic region groups. Proportionately more females (3.1 percent) saw a podiatrist than did males (1.6 percent). The likelihood of consulting a podiatrist is greater among older persons. During the survey year 1.2 percent of children under 6 years of age and 7.0 percent of adults 65 years of age and over consulted a podiatrist. Among persons with family incomes of less than \$15,000, there was a slight inverse relationship between income and the use of podiatrists. The usual activity categories that had the greatest percent of persons consulting a podiatrist were persons keeping house and retired persons. Contact with a podiatrist was proportionately less frequent among persons living in the South (1.3 percent) and in the West Regions (2.0 percent) than among persons living in the other two regions. Proportionately more persons residing within SMSA's (2.8 percent) consulted a podiatrist than did persons residing outside SMSA's (1.5 percent). Within SMSA's, central city residents consulted a podiatrist more often (3.1 percent) than did residents outside the central city (2.5 percent). Outside SMSA's, the percent of persons who received services from a podiatrist was higher among non-farm dwellers (1.6 percent) than it was among farm dwellers (0.8 percent).

While there were some exceptions among the sociodemographic groups, these differences in the use of podiatrists also occurred for each sex considered separately. Among females, however, the differences were usually more pronounced. For instance, among the age groups the range for females was from 0.9 percent to 8.9 percent, while for males a much smaller range was found, from 1.0 percent to 4.3 percent.

USE OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

An estimated 1.6 percent of the population saw a physical therapist at least once during the

12 months preceding the interview (table 3). There was less variation in the utilization rates of physical therapists among categories of the population compared with the use of chiropractors and podiatrists. The range was from 0.4 percent for children under 6 years of age to 3.2 percent for retired persons.

The differences for sex, color, and place of residence groups with respect to the utilization of physical therapists were within the range associated with the sample variation of the estimates. However, substantial differences in the use of physical therapists occurred among age, family income, usual activity status, and geographic region groups. The likelihood of contacting a physical therapist tended to increase with age. During the survey year 0.4 percent of children under 6 years of age and 2.3 percent of adults 45-64 years of age consulted a physical therapist. The slight difference between the percents shown for persons 65 years of age and over and for persons 45-64 years is within the sampling variability of the two estimates. Persons with family incomes of less than \$4,000 and persons in the income range of \$7,000 to \$9,999 consulted a physical therapist proportionately more often than did persons in other family income groups. Proportionately more persons keeping house and retired persons consulted a physical therapist; however, the "other" usual activity group also had a relatively large percent (5.8) of persons who consulted a physical therapist (table 3). Contact with a physical therapist was more likely among persons living in the West (1.9 percent) and North Central Regions (1.7 percent) than among persons in the other two geographic regions.

The data for males and females shown in table 3 indicate only one notable difference between the sexes in the use of physical therapists; retired females (7.8 percent) consulted a physical therapist proportionately more often than did retired males (2.8 percent).

Table 3. Number and percent of persons who received services from a physical therapist during the year preceding time of interview, by sex and selected characteristics: United States, 1974

Characteristic	Number of persons who received service in thousands			Percent of persons who received service		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
All persons ¹ -----	3,242	1,581	1,660	1.6	1.6	1.5
<u>Age</u>						
Under 6 years-----	86	53	33	0.4	0.5	0.4
6-16 years-----	294	181	114	0.7	0.8	0.5
17-24 years-----	383	213	171	1.3	1.5	1.1
25-44 years-----	1,034	567	467	2.0	2.3	1.8
45-64 years-----	984	419	565	2.3	2.1	2.5
65 years and over-----	460	149	311	2.2	1.7	2.6
<u>Color</u>						
White-----	2,869	1,384	1,485	1.6	1.6	1.6
All other-----	372	197	175	1.4	1.6	1.2
<u>Family income</u>						
Less than \$2,000-----	145	45	100	2.0	1.7	2.1
\$2,000-\$3,999-----	377	143	234	2.3	2.2	2.4
\$4,000-\$6,999-----	464	274	190	1.6	2.0	1.2
\$7,000-\$9,999-----	501	217	285	1.9	1.6	2.1
\$10,000-\$14,999-----	680	382	297	1.3	1.5	1.2
\$15,000 or more-----	889	458	430	1.4	1.4	1.4
<u>Usual activity status²</u>						
Going to school-----	417	246	171	0.8	0.9	0.6
Working-----	1,325	861	465	1.7	1.7	1.6
Keeping house-----	811	...	811	2.0	...	2.0
Retired-----	298	239	58	3.2	2.8	7.8
Other-----	305	182	122	5.8	5.7	6.0
<u>Geographic region</u>						
Northeast-----	701	342	359	1.4	1.5	1.4
North Central-----	954	457	498	1.7	1.7	1.7
South-----	870	434	436	1.3	1.4	1.3
West-----	715	348	367	1.9	1.9	1.9
<u>Place of residence</u>						
SMSA-----	2,268	1,048	1,220	1.6	1.5	1.6
Central city-----	1,029	470	559	1.6	1.6	1.7
Outside central city-----	1,239	578	661	1.5	1.5	1.6
Outside SMSA-----	973	533	440	1.5	1.7	1.3
Nonfarm-----	891	476	415	1.6	1.7	1.4
Farm-----	83	57	26	1.1	1.5	0.7

¹Includes unknown income.

²Excludes children under 6 years of age.

TECHNICAL NOTES

The data presented in this report were obtained from household interviews in the Health Interview Survey. These interviews were conducted throughout 1974 in a probability sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States. During that year approximately 116,000 persons living in about 40,000 households were included in the sample. The questions on utilization of medical practitioners were asked of each household member who was identified as a "sample person." This subsample included approximately 37,062 persons.

For a detailed discussion of the limitations and qualifications of data collected in the Health Interview Survey, see an earlier report entitled "Current Estimates from the Health Interview Survey, United States, 1974," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 10, No. 100, DHEW Publication No. (HRA) 76-1527.

The sampling pattern for sample person selection was based on the total number of related and unrelated household members. Sample persons (a one-third subsample of the actual Health Interview Survey sample) were selected by the interviewer at the time of interview. To determine which household member(s) to designate as a sample person, the interviewer referred to a preselected flashcard after listing all related and unrelated persons in the household on the questionnaire. The flashcard contained, for each household size, one or more person numbers that were to be identified as the sample person(s).

Since the estimates shown are based on a sample of the population rather than on the entire population, they are subject to sampling error. Standard errors appropriate for the estimates of the number of persons are shown in table I; standard errors appropriate for percentages are shown in table II.

In this report, terms such as "similar" and "the same" mean that no statistical significance exists between the statistics being compared. Terms relating to differences (i.e., "greater,"

Table I. Standard errors of estimates of aggregates

Size of estimate in thousands	Standard error in thousands
70	21
100	25
300	43
500	55
700	65
1,000	78
5,000	173
10,000	243
20,000	337
30,000	405
50,000	501
100,000	626

Table II. Standard errors, expressed in percentage points, of estimated percentages

Base of percentage in thousands	Estimated percentage				
	.02 or 98	.05 or 95	10 or 90	20 or 80	50
70	4.1	6.4	8.9	11.8	14.8
100	3.5	5.4	7.4	9.9	12.4
300	2.0	3.1	4.3	5.7	7.1
500	1.5	2.4	3.3	4.4	5.5
700	1.3	2.0	2.8	3.7	4.7
1,000	1.1	1.7	2.3	3.1	3.9
5,000	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.4	1.7
10,000	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2
20,000	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.9
30,000	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.7
50,000	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
100,000	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4

"less," etc.) indicate that differences are statistically significant. The *t* test with a critical value of 1.96 (0.05 level of significance) was used to test all comparisons which are discussed. Lack of comment regarding the difference between any two statistics does *not* mean the difference was tested and found to be not significant.

SYMBOLS

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Category not applicable-----	...
Quantity zero-----	-
Quantity more than 0 but less than 0.05----	0.0
Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision-----	*

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