



March 2, 2009

My fellow Acupuncturists,

In this, the year of the Earth-Ox, we are reminded of the need for dedication and the tenacity to achieve the sustained promise of our profession.

By working together, we become more recognized for our contributions to the emerging field of Integrative Medicine, where we will work together as partners with other healthcare providers and physicians.

About the free OAAOM monthly e-Newsletter

As you know, we are providing this free newsletter to help unite the Oregon AOM community and to develop a shared vision of where we want to be in 10 years. **Please give us feedback! This organization needs your input and suggestions to become more aware and responsive to the Oregon AOM community. Can you spare a few minutes of time for your profession?**

To keep this monthly Newsletter of long-term value to you we are also adding a **Research Corner**-devoted to ongoing, self-directed education on TCM research issues and supported by contributions from OCOM Research. Also added is a **Legislative Updates** section, on the latest hot **State and Federal Healthcare** issues that need our active participation. Please feel free to forward this letter to those who may be interested in hearing about the OAAOM.

The Oregon Medical Board currently lists over 900 Licensed Acupuncturists who are practicing AOM clinicians in the state. **As the Membership Chair I encourage all 900+ Licensed Acupuncturists (L. Ac.'s) in Oregon to become OAAOM members and to participate in raising the awareness of the public about our medicine.**

I recognize that we are going through tough times with respect to the economy; and, therefore, we are willing to work with you financially in becoming a member. Send us your blessings for the advancement of our profession, and your commitment to make a contribution or donation, to the extent that you can.

Here are a few snapshots that provide a broad outline of who we are, as a group.

Where did Oregon L. Ac.'s get their training?

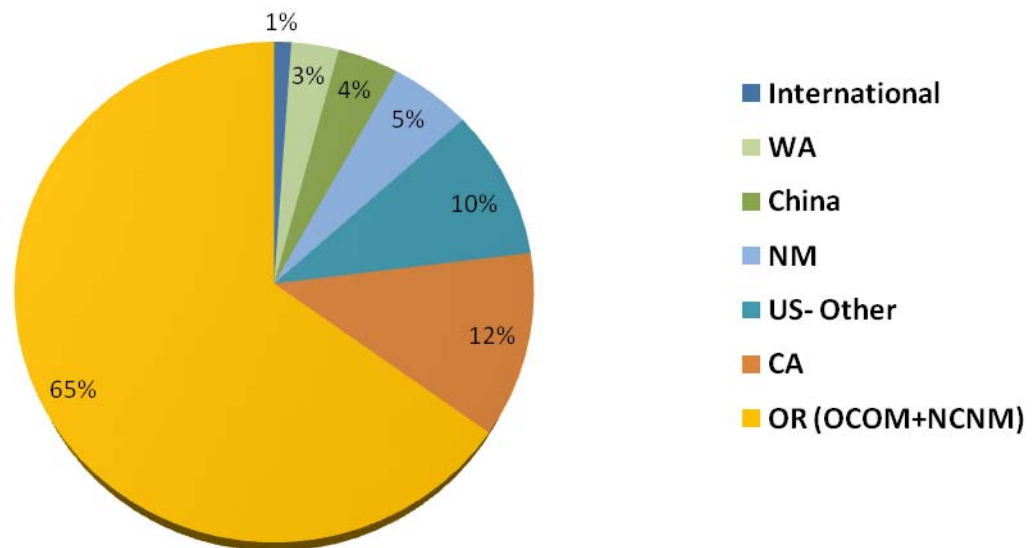


Figure 1: Oregon acupuncturists are a diverse group, and this is reflected in our "origin"- i.e., where we got our training. While the majority of us got our training in Oregon- we are a rooted community! - many come from California (CA), New Mexico (NM), Washington (WA) and other states in the US, and abroad, mostly China. [Can we respect this diversity?](#)

Our diversity as a group is also reflected in our age distribution, as shown below-

Oregon L. Ac.'s by Age

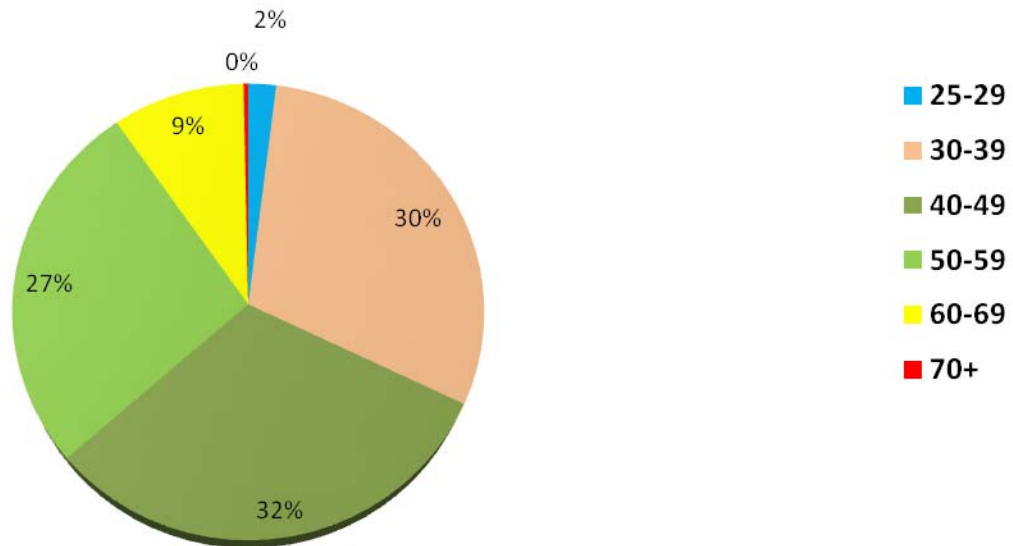


Figure 2.: Most of our acupuncturists in Oregon fall into 4 broad age groups, ranging in age from 30-70, with almost equal numbers in the 3 decadal age groups between 30 and 60, as shown above. Most of us will have an AOM practice that will last anywhere from 10 to 30 years. Think of all the friends we will have if we take the time to get to know each other! [Make a lifetime of friends at the OAAOM!](#)

Oregon's first Licensed Acupuncturist was trained in Hong Kong and started his practice here in 1974. We have also had quite a few who were practicing before the mid-1980s. An active program in acupuncture began producing our own L. Ac.'s in Oregon in 1986. **Many thanks to Satya Ambrose and Eric Stephens for launching the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM) in 1983- home to over 50% of the acupuncturists currently practicing in Oregon.**

Distribution by year of License

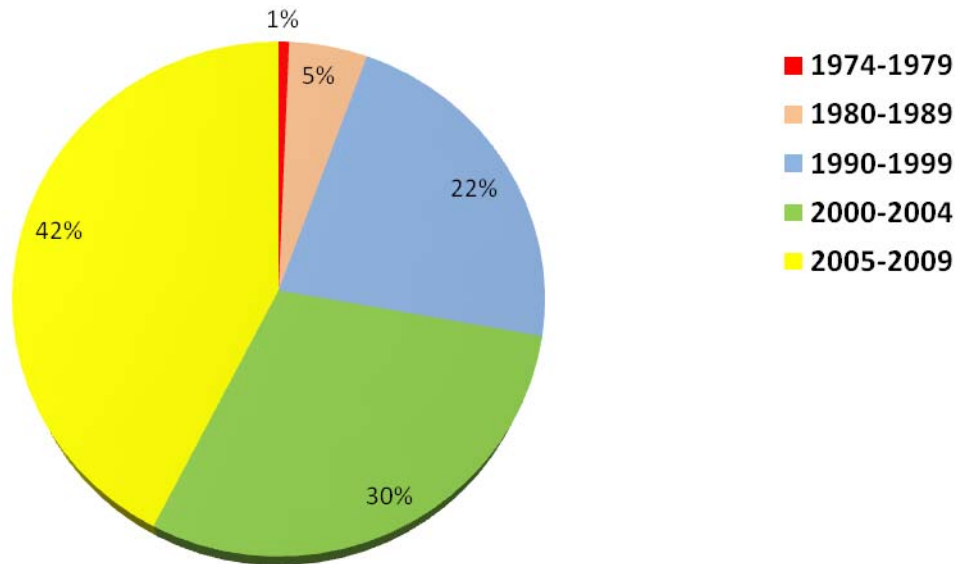


Figure 3: As the figure above indicates, we have an escalating number of acupuncturists who choose to practice in Oregon. While this may appear to some as a problem, the high density of AOM practitioners in this state allows us to work together to see all sides of an issue and ensure the delivery of safe, economical, and efficacious healthcare. This strength in diversity will put us at the forefront of the revolution that US healthcare will undergo in the next decade as we approach Universal Healthcare in the US. Your active participation in the governance of our profession will help us create a better life for all AOM clinicians in Oregon and in the country, at the emerging frontiers of Integrative Medicine. [Join us at the OAAOM!](#)

Students, do you know that OCOM will recognize up to 10 hours of Community Outreach Hours for volunteering with the OAAOM? **Besides, Student Memberships cost only \$50 for the entire time you are a student.** What does it cost for one hour of consulting time with a senior AOM practitioner? *Join the OAAOM and you can get that type of business development support for FREE!*

As a personal appeal, I ask senior Oregon AOM practitioners/clinicians for their commitment and support by joining the OAAOM as Professional Level Members for the next two years. **Our data shows that over 220 L. Ac.'s have been in practice in Oregon for over 10 years.** We cannot lose the ground that has been gained over the last two decades, with your hard work, just as we are facing the possibility



of Universal Healthcare. All of you know what AOM can offer to the public in the form of safe, efficacious and economical preventative medicine.

In addition, over 350 of us have joined the ranks of Oregon L. Ac.'s in the last 5 years. Please join the OAAOM as Professional level members at the 2009 Annual Conference and help the OAAOM draft policy guidelines for the next decade. **You just cannot beat the deal we are offering for the 1st Annual OAAOM Conference.** Join us and add your vision and strengths towards the advancement of our profession.

Why is this important?

Margaret Sanger, our Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee Chair, will tell you that 2009 is the start of a new biennium and that a lot of legislative bills associated with providing universal healthcare for Oregonians will be discussed and voted upon in this Legislature session.

Consider, for example, the inclusion of our medicine as a treatment modality by State insurance for drug detoxification (e.g., in HB2049), and for other conditions for which AOM is known to be very effective. Related issues, such as a shift in the legislature towards Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) to qualify treatment modalities, remain open and in need of our focused input as AOM practitioners.

Without your direct input, as members, we cannot accurately represent your needs before our legislators. For example, please visit the links posted in the Legislative Updates section of this newsletter.

Other Benefits of being an OAAOM Member

* Creation of a supportive community of Licensed Acupuncturists (L.Ac.'s). Your presence and gifts matter; you enrich the AOM community of Oregon! **What happens to our scope of practice affects all acupuncturists.** Whether you see 1 patient a week or 60, whether your preference is for 5 Element or 8 Principle styles of diagnosis and treatment, whether you prefer to use TuiNa or Shiatsu, or whether you integrate Qigong or Taijiquan into your treatments, we are a community of healers belonging to a 2000+ year old system of medicine. **This issue is important! This is where we all must learn to work together for our medicine.**

* **Inexpensive educational (CEU) opportunities-** what classes would advance your professional development? Should current TCM research be part of a monthly colloquium and OAAOM Fellowship event? We need your feedback to make these types of events worthwhile and relevant.

* **Mentorship program and networking with established peer-practitioners in the community.** As a new or returning L. Ac., would you like to have an active practice/business development program that matches you with an established practitioner who wants to serve as a mentor and give you an hour of their time every month? **What support would you like to have in this regard? Talk to us ... for general inquiries, you can reach us via info@OAAOM.com!**



Look up! The sky ain't falling...

I must admit some apprehension about the current state of the economy and about how it has everybody concerned for our future. However, it is at these times, when we feel most challenged about our livelihood, that we have the greatest opportunity to find strength in the large number of fellow AOM practitioners we have in the state. Figure 3 (see above) shows how our profession has grown over the last 20 years. Who can speak for our medicine better than we can? Would it help us to talk to each other? **Perhaps the more relevant question would be whether we can trust each other to share our opinions openly and also to listen to alternate points of view.**

A Case Study for Acupuncturists in Oregon

We need to find strength in numbers rather than dissipate our collective Qi by squabbling amongst ourselves. **As an example, the L. Ac.'s in New Mexico came together in a time of crisis and built an impressive amount of collective strength of purpose to drive the legislature to recognize them as Oriental Medicine Doctors (OMDs).** Can we come together, and like our brothers and sisters in New Mexico, build a respected and well-compensated profession for ourselves in Oregon? **Over 220 L. Ac.'s have been practicing in Oregon for over 10 years.** They can show us how to make things work for us.

Tell us about your priorities...

Is the future of our profession, and the gains we can achieve in this biennium, in securing more work for L. Ac.'s, worth a buck a day? *The 1st OAAOM Annual Conference (13 CEU's) and Membership combined dues are only \$200 for Professional Members and \$50 for Students, if you join by March 21. Our 2009 Conference Chair, Mona Searles, believes that this wonderful opportunity is needed to build our AOM community.*

*We have made this offer to build solidarity in the large Oregon AOM Community. You can see from our proposed biennial budget that we need at least \$42,000 per year to run this organization. The OAAOM needs the voluntary donations and contributions from those who can afford it. Make an investment in the long-term health of our profession! With dedicated office staff, like a Senior Office Manager or an Executive Director, we can make this organization more visible to our legislators and to the public. **Will you help us advance our profession at the state level?***

Can you dedicate the money spent on eating out once a week, ~\$10, for a year to your profession? That is all it will take for us to get our organization financially stable enough to get results for you in the coming years. *Only \$10 a week, will help build a highly visible AOM state organization that advocates for the profession in Oregon and works to draft healthcare policy on our behalf. We are expecting Universal Healthcare as part of the sweeping reforms in U.S. healthcare, proposed by the Obama administration. Can we, as AOM practitioners, help the public improve their health and reduce healthcare costs? How do we get heard at Salem, Oregon and at Washington, D.C.? **Think about it!***



Be Honest and give us your feedback!

Looking ahead, with a glance towards our past...

In Oregon, our enviable Scope of Practice has been developed and protected by the contributions of many dedicated men and women who have worked diligently over the last three decades on behalf of those of us who joined the profession later. *Can we continue this effort for the next decade?* **With over 900 L. Ac's currently registered in the state, we can be a powerful voice for the medicine we practice, if we can come together and find our collective vision and voice while recognizing the need for diversity. WE can be teachers AND students and continue learning together!**

If I can be of any help, or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via PK@oaaom.com. WE, the Board, all want to hear from you!

Sincerely,

PK

PK Melethil, L. Ac.

Chair, Membership and Public Relations Committee

Oregon Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (OAAOM)