

# 2004 Massage Therapy Consumer Survey Fact Sheet

Following are findings of a telephone survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International, Princeton, NJ, the eighty annual survey commissioned by the American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA®). The survey was conducted August 5-8, 2004 among a national probability sample of 1,009 adults (507 men and 502 women) ages 18 and older, living in private households in the continental United States. The survey has a confidence level of plus or minus 3 percent.

## **Massage for Pain Management & Relief**

- Ninety percent of respondents agreed that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Nearly half (49 percent of those polled) have had a massage at some time to relieve pain; compared to 47 percent who gave the same response in 2003.
- Massage follows medication as the form of pain relief respondents said gave the greatest relief from pain: 30 percent said medication, followed by 21 percent for massage therapy, 19 percent chiropractic and 16 percent physical therapy.
- Therapy for an injury would motivate more people to have regular massage (17 percent) than any reason other than a discount or free massage (23 percent). Among 18-24 year olds, 31 percent said injury therapy would be their motivator vs. discount or free massage (25 percent). Among those 65 years and older, therapy for an injury also is a greater motivator for regular massage (21 percent) than discount or free massage (11 percent)

## **Popularity and Use of Massage**

- More than one in five adults surveyed (21 percent) received a massage within the past 12 months - maintaining the same percentage as reported in 2003, and representing a 13-point jump since 1997. Twenty-seven percent of those ages 35-44 and 26 percent of African-Americans had a massage within the last 12 months.
- Thirty-two percent of respondents received a massage within the past five years - equaling 2003 survey results.
- Sixty-five percent of those polled would recommend massage therapy to someone they know; 75 percent of African-Americans and 78 percent of Hispanics would recommend massage therapy.

## **Massage on the Rise in African-American Population**

- Twenty-six percent of African-American respondents had a massage in the past 12 months, compared to 21 percent of the overall population. This is a 12 percentage point jump since 2003.
- Thirty-five percent of African-American respondents had a massage in the past 5 years, compared to 32 percent of the overall population.
- Among African-American respondents who discussed massage with their physicians or other healthcare providers, 83 percent of the healthcare providers strongly recommended or encouraged massage, compared to 47 percent in 2003.

- Physicians and physical therapists were the healthcare providers who most recommended massage to their African-American patients - 59 percent of physicians vs. 46 percent in 2003; and 76 percent of physical therapists vs. 41 percent in 2003.
- While 36 percent of all adults reported receiving massage for medical reasons in the last five years, 43 percent of African-American adults did so.
- Among medical reasons for massage, 11 percent of all respondents received massage for injury recovery or rehabilitation in the past five years, while 23 percent of African-American respondents did so.
- Eighteen percent of all respondents say they had a massage for relaxation or stress relief in the past five years, while 22 percent of African-American adults did so.

### **Positive View of Massage by Healthcare Providers**

- One in five of those polled (20 percent) say they have discussed massage therapy with their doctor or other healthcare provider, up from 14 percent in 2002.
- For those who discussed massage therapy with their healthcare providers, 62 percent of the providers strongly recommended or encouraged their patients to get a massage.
- Of those who indicated that a healthcare professional had recommended massage therapy, 61 percent indicated it was a physician, 45 percent said massage therapy was recommended by a physical therapist, and 42 percent by a chiropractor.

### **Where Americans are Getting Their Massages**

- People receive massage in a variety of locations, from their homes to massage therapists' offices to spas - 21 percent received their last massage at a spa.
- Seventeen percent received their last massage in the massage therapist's location, while the third most common location for where people received their last massage was at home or in the home of someone they know.
- Asked to list their top three choices for where they would prefer to receive a professional massage, 30 percent of respondents said they prefer a spa [while 37 percent of African-American respondents and 39 percent of Hispanics prefer a spa]. Twenty-six percent prefer to receive professional massage at home, and 23 percent prefer the massage therapist's location.

### **Regional Differences**

- The southern U.S. saw the biggest jump from 2003 in those who had a massage within the past 12 months – from 16 percent responding this way in 2003 to 23 percent in 2004.
- More people in the Northeast (32 percent) expect to get massage within the next 12 months. Twenty-nine percent in the region had this expectation in 2003.