

# Therapy Use Combinations of Massage Clients

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## Introduction

Massage therapy clients are likely to have used one or more other forms of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). The use of CAM therapies alongside massage has been well documented in the published literature [1]. This study adds to the literature by describing the frequency and composition of multi-therapy combinations used concurrent with massage.

## Objectives

This study reports the proportions of massage clients who have used (or not used) any one, two and three of the following in the past 12 months: **vitamins or herbal supplements** (supplement therapy); **chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation** (chiropractic therapy); and **yoga, tai chi or qi gong practice** (movement therapy). The study also reports proportions for lifetime use of the therapy combinations. The study does not address issues of satisfaction or effectiveness.

## Methods

Data from the 2012 National Health Interview survey were used to create the eight mutually exclusive groups of therapy use combinations. Data were analyzed using SAS software procedures designed for the analysis of complex sample surveys. All percentages reported are weighted. Descriptive statistics of the sample are presented below in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Percentage [CI] of respondents by demographic characteristics

	All Respondents N = 34252	Received Massage from Practitioner in Past 12 Months (N = 2076)
Sex		
Male	48% [47-49]	36% [33-38]
Female	52% [51-53]	64% [62-67]
Race		
NH White	66% [66-67]	77% [76-80]
NH Black	11% [11-12]	6% [5-8]
NH Other	7% [7-8]	6% [5-8]
Hispanic	15% [14-16]	9% [8-11]
Age		
18-35 years	32% [31-33]	30% [28-33]
36-64 years	50% [49-51]	58% [55-61]
65+ years	18% [17-18]	12% [10-14]

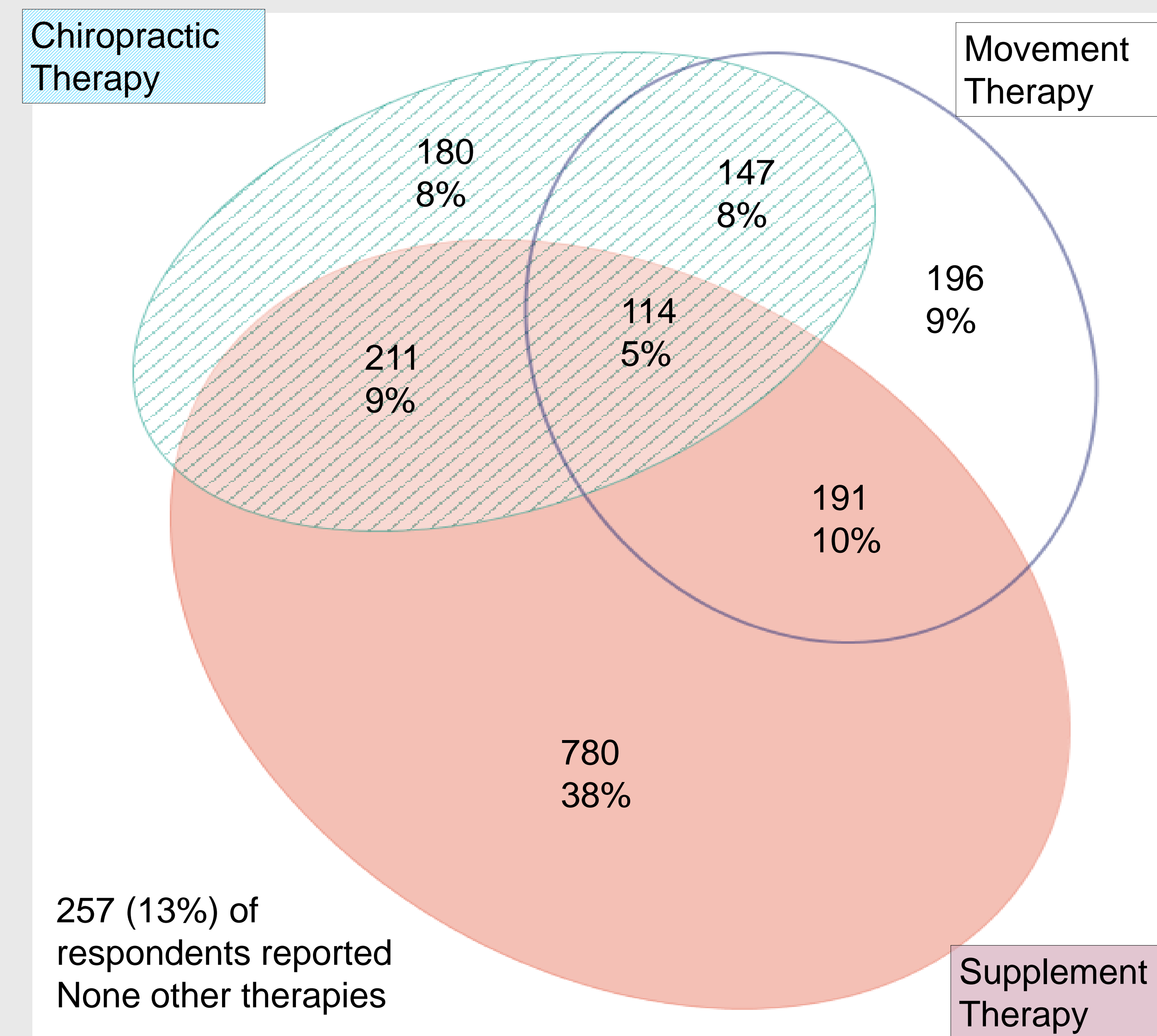


Figure 1. Past Year Therapy Use Combinations among Massage Clients

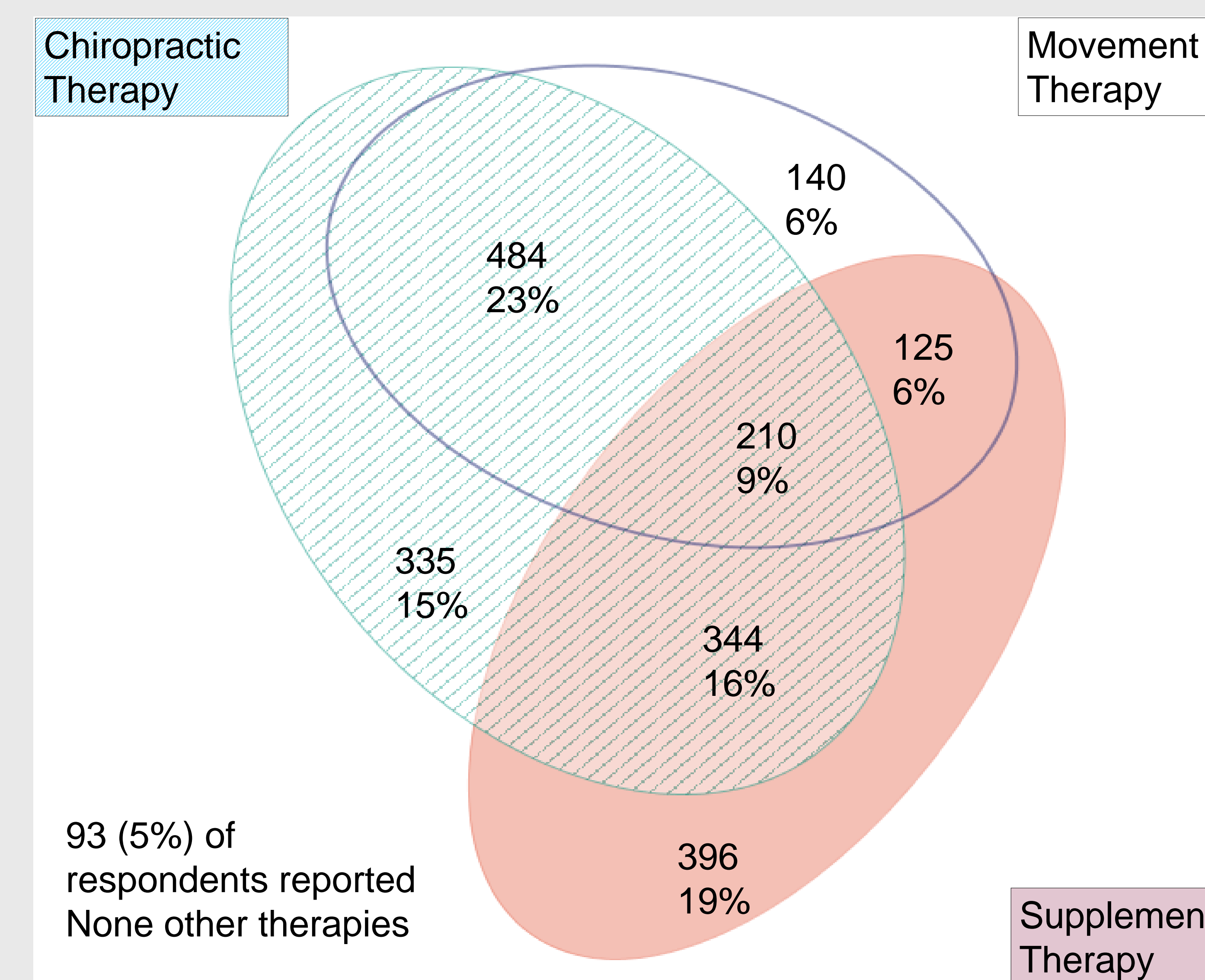


Figure 2. Lifetime Therapy Use Combinations among Massage Clients

## Results

Over 50 percent of massage therapy clients have used two or more other CAM therapies ever and more than 25 percent of massage therapy clients have used two or more other CAM therapies in the past 12 months. Among respondents who had seen a massage therapist in the past year (n = 2076), 13 percent reported using no other CAM therapies in the past year. Results further describing the distribution of lifetime and past-year multi-therapy combination usage are presented below in **Table 2**. Results are also presented as area-proportional Venn diagrams in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** [2].

Table 2. Percentage [CI] of respondents by multi-therapy combination

	Ever Engaged in Wellness Practices	Engaged in Wellness Practices in Past 12 Months
None	5% [4-6]	13% [11-15]
Supplements	19% [17-21]	38% [35-41]
Chiropractic	15% [13-17]	8% [7-10]
Movement	6% [5-8]	9% [7-10]
Supplements and Chiropractic	16% [14-18]	9% [8-11]
Supplements and Movement	6% [5-8]	10% [8-11]
Chiropractic and Movement	23% [20-25]	8% [6-9]
Supplements and Chiropractic and Movement	9% [8-11]	5% [4-7]

## Conclusions

Most massage therapy clients have experienced other CAM therapies and many continue to engage in multi-therapy combinations at the same time as massage. This research can help massage therapists to initiate and guide conversations about other forms of care clients may be using.

## References

- Clarke TC, Black LI, Stussman BJ, Barnes PM, Nahin RL. Trends in the use of complementary health approaches among adults: United States, 2002–2012. National health statistics reports; no 79. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.
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