



Tethered Oral Tissues Services Advertised On Pediatric Dentistry Practice Websites

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BACKGROUND

Tethered oral tissues, which primarily involves the labial and lingual frenula, have become a more common concern amongst parents. Frenectomy related to ankyloglossia or lip tie has doubled in diagnosis and procedures between 2012 and 2016 in the United States. A study found that the overall prevalence of ankyloglossia is only 8% in children aged <1 year old. The treatment for ankyloglossia are indicated at multiple stages of life – infancy due to the mother having difficulty feeding, when speech is delayed for their age, it is causing a midline diastema, or a periodontal issue. There has not been any research on how many pediatric dental offices advertise the treatment for tethered oral tissues nor what kind of information is provided.

PURPOSE

This project studies the consumer facing websites of pediatric dentists for informational content and advertisement of tethered oral tissues related services offered by their practices.

METHODS

Four hundred seventy-six websites of American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) affiliated pediatric dentists were randomly selected for review. After collection of the data, one hundred forty-three websites were excluded due to no longer having an active website, the practice does not mention a pediatric dentist working there, or the website is no longer focused on dentistry.

Three hundred thirty-three practice websites were categorized by AAPD District to study geographic variation in these services. Written and visual content regarding practice type, preoperative signs and symptoms of tethered oral tissues, lactation considerations, surgical methods of treatment used, postoperative care instructions, and other consumer focused information were reviewed, compiled, and interpreted from practice websites advertising services for tethered oral tissues.

The list of established practices were from 2016 AAPD Directory. Statistical analyses were described through chi-squared tests (MedCalc) with a statistical significance set at P<0.05.

RESULTS

Figure 1: A Total of Eighty-Two (25%) Practices' Websites Advertised Tethered Oral Tissue Services Categorized by the AAPD District (P=0.0839).

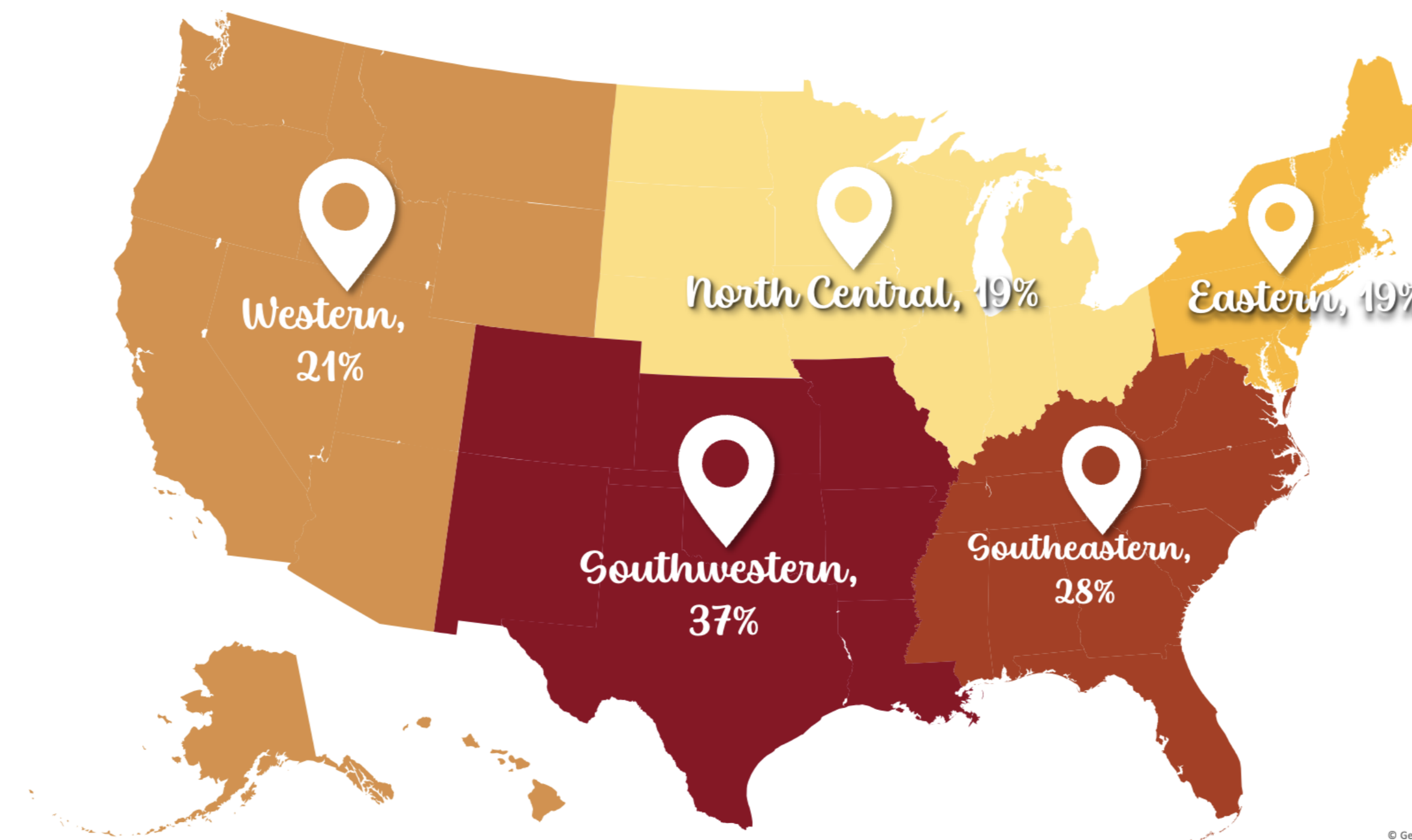
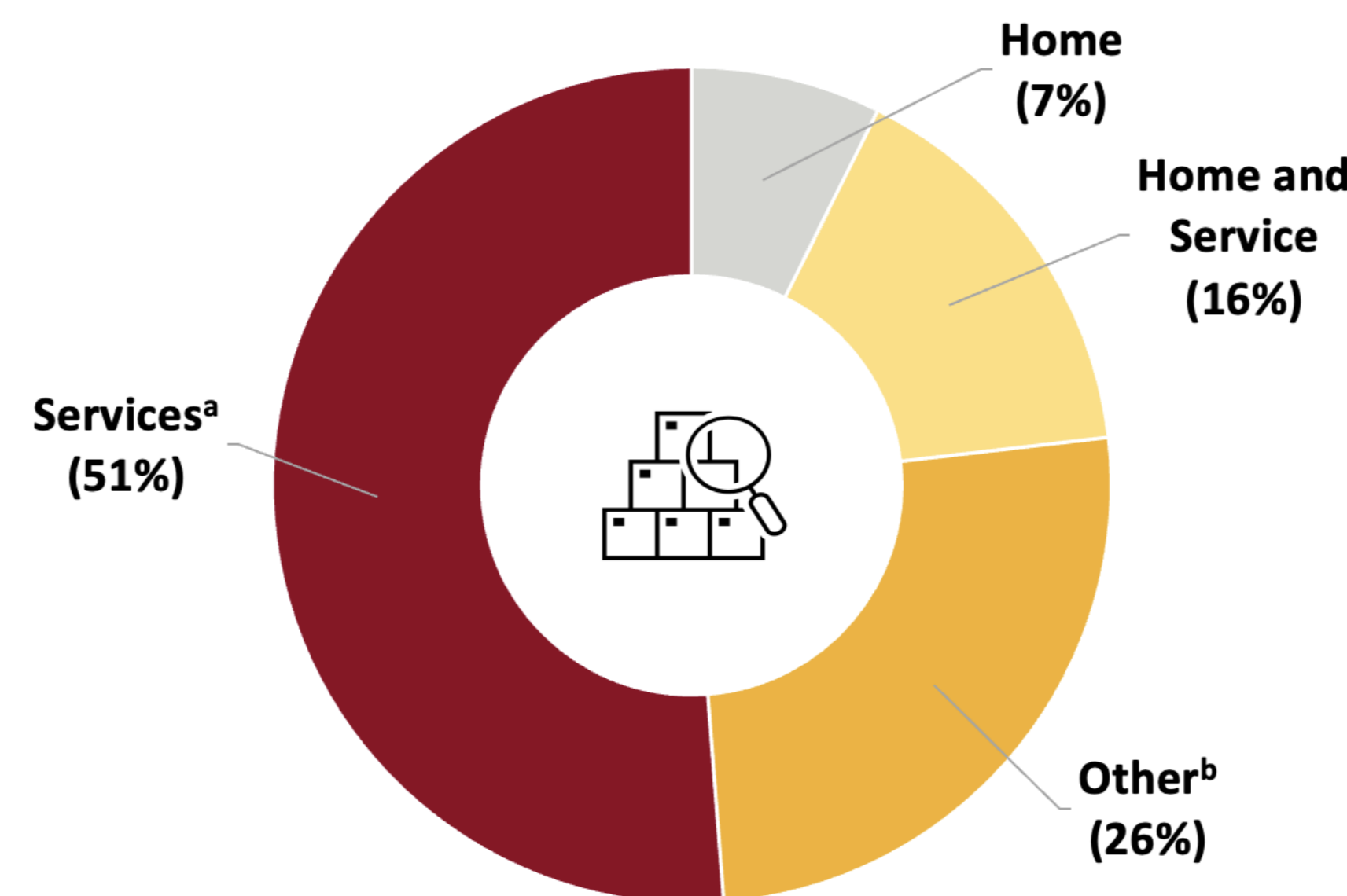


Figure 2: Website Pages Where Tethered Oral Tissues are Advertised.



^aIncludes the location labeled as treatments
^bOther locations were labeled as: Frenectomy, FAQ, Pediatric Dentistry, Preventative Care, Highlights, Laser, Dental Topic, Early Infant Care, Highlights, Tongue Tie

RESULTS CONTINUED

Figure 3: Most Common Names For the Procedure.

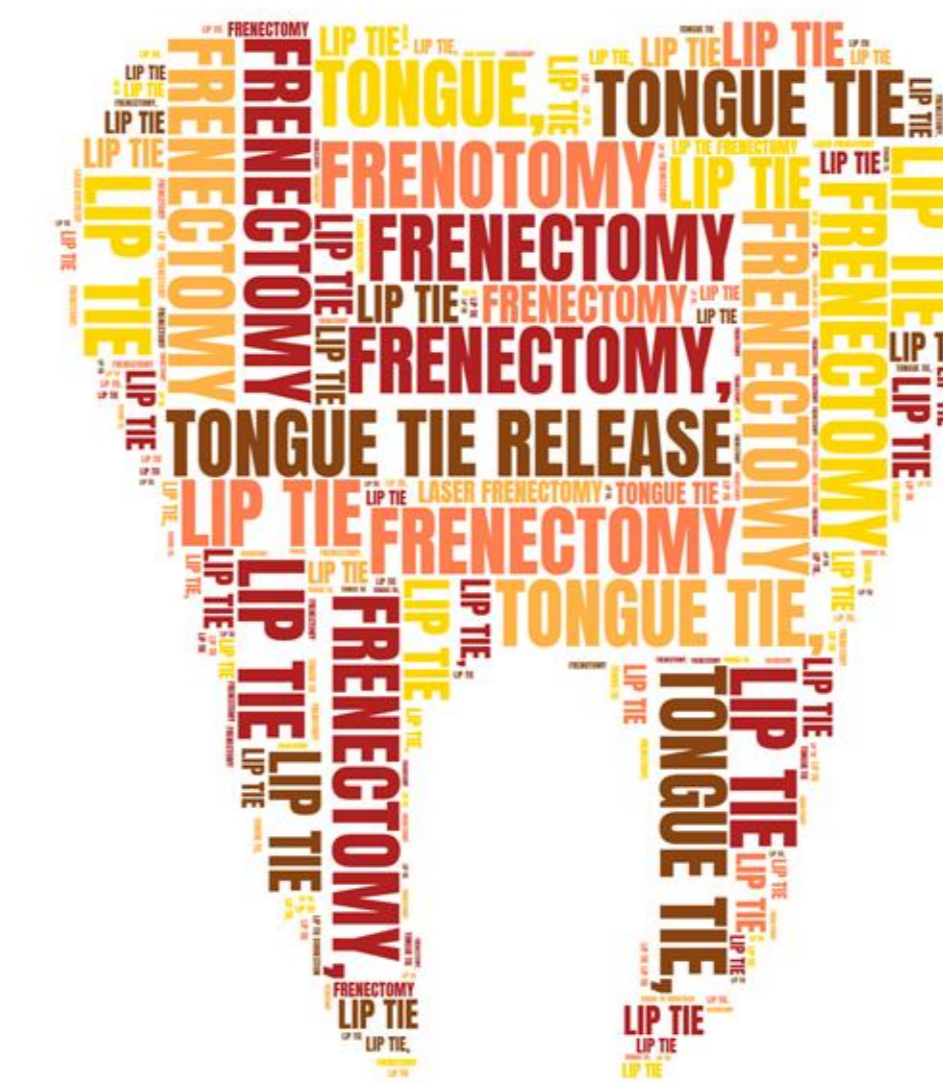


Figure 4: Methods Used to Surgically Treat Tethered Oral Tissues.

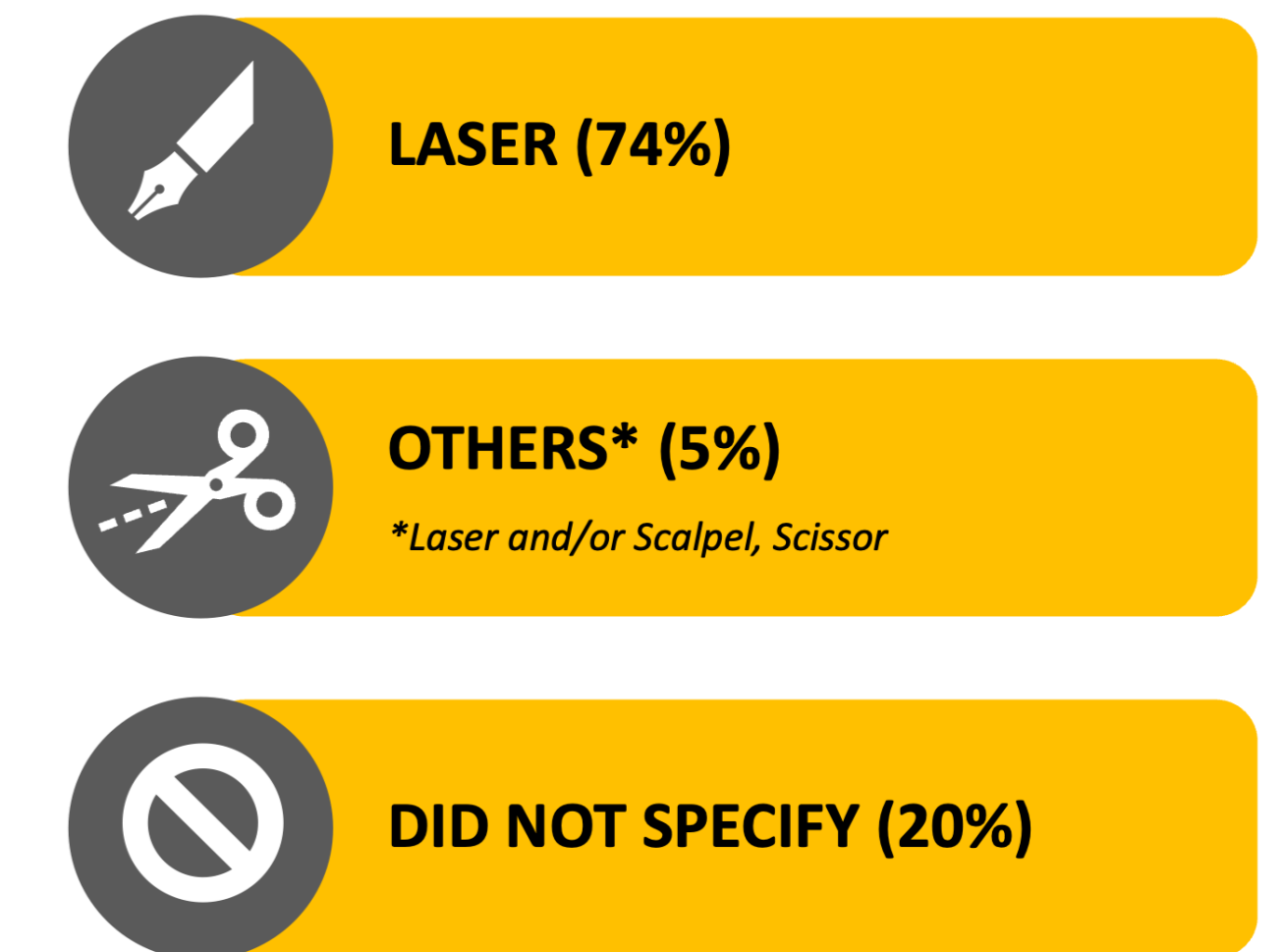


Table 1: Frequency of Informational Content Advertised on Practice Websites.

HIGH COVERAGE	MEDIUM COVERAGE	LOW COVERAGE
Method of procedure (81%)	Provided a picture (38%)	Pre-op (9%)
Lactation (74%)	Comfort/Pain (33%)	Risks/Safety (7%)
Definitions (54%)	Benefits (26%)	Interdisciplinary team (6%)
Signs/Symptoms (52%)	Post-op (22%)	Doctor's training (6%)
	Length of time (20%)	Assessment/Dx (6%)
	Complications if untreated (17%)	No information provided (6%)
	Recovery/Healing (15%)	Follow ups (2%)
		Orthodontic reasons (2%)

CONCLUSIONS

Twenty five percent of practice websites reviewed in this study currently advertise treatment for tethered oral tissues. These websites represent practices serving their community for at least 10 years. The percentage of practices advertising these services did not differ significantly between the five AAPD districts. Inclusion of more recently established practices in future studies will help us to better understand changing trends in the advertisement of tethered oral tissues services by AAPD affiliated pediatric dental practices.