

AN EXAMINATION OF THE USE OF THE TERM *ORIENTAL*
IN THE AOM PROFESSION IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Background: The term *Oriental* has been used officially by the AOM profession in its title in the United States since 1996. Popular culture and academia in the United States avoid the term in favor of more precise and perceptibly less offensive terminology. In the AOM community, although individual practitioners and businesses have long used alternative names, legalistic challenges regarding the use of the term *Oriental* are beginning to surface at the state level. As a result, attention has been drawn to this issue at the national level.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to examine the usage of the term *Oriental* in the United States with the specific focus on its use within the AOM profession. Primary objectives include: to determine if there is a will within the AOM community to advance dialogue on this issue, to ascertain if sociohistoric and linguistic perspectives support the re-evaluation of the use of this term, and to determine if the AOM community accepts and supports the use of the term *Oriental* to represent the profession.

Methods: The methods used to achieve the objectives stated above were to engage AOM representatives in a two round policy Delphi study.

Findings: The results of this study indicate that there is a strong will within the AOM community to advance dialogue on the issue of the use of the term *Oriental* to represent the profession. Participants agreed that it is desirable to adopt a name that is

less controversial, more accurate and culturally sensitive and that a name change should not be forced upon the profession by legislative mandate. The study revealed disagreements pertaining to the relevancy of the issue of AOM's use of the term *Oriental* as a priority for the profession, as an issue that contributes to the disunity of the profession, and its semantic implications for a professional title.

Keywords: Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM), Oriental, policy Delphi.