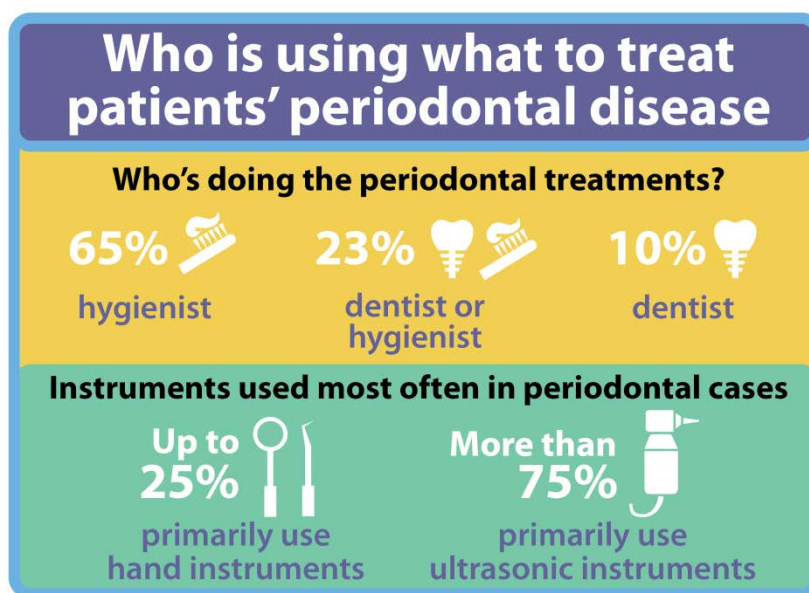


Quick Poll Results—Are Hand Instruments Falling Out of Favor for Periodontal Treatments?

Scaling and root planing are an important part of dentists' armamentarium for the treatment of periodontal disease. Teaching dental students how to use hand instruments to perform these nonsurgical treatments is a significant part of dental schools' hygiene curriculum. Students also practice these skills during their clinical training. But what happens when students graduate and enter practice—are they still using hand instruments or do they rely on ultrasonic piezo instruments for scaling and root planing? Our quick poll of hygienists and dentists reveals that hand instruments are still common in dental offices, but less popular than the ultrasonic instruments.



The quick poll asked Network members about their choice of instruments for nonsurgical periodontal scaling/root planing. The respondents were general dentists (71 percent), hygienists (21 percent), and other specialists (8 percent). When asked which instruments in their office are routinely used for scaling and root planing, almost all of the 383 respondents checked hand instruments (97 percent) *and* ultrasonic piezo instruments (95 percent). Only 11 percent said lasers.

Ultrasonic/piezo instrumentation was the primary choice for treatment in more than 75 percent of treated patients, whereas hand instruments were primary up to 25 percent of the time. Many respondents noted that they use ultrasonic instruments, followed by hand instruments.