

Center for Reiki Research Study Summary

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Effects of Reiki on pain and selected affective and personality variables of chronically ill patients

Reference

Dressin, L.J. and Singg, S. Effects of Reiki on pain and selected affective and personality variables of chronically ill patients. *Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine*, 9(1):53-82, 1998.

Purpose of Study

To compare the effects of Reiki, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), false Reiki (placebo) and no therapy (control) on reduction of pain, emotional improvement, personality enhancement and spiritual growth in chronically ill patients.

Objective/goals/hypotheses

The first goal was to compare pre and post-test measures of pain, depression, state anxiety, desirable changes in personality variables (trait anxiety, self-esteem, locus of control, and realistic sense of personal control), and stronger faith in God. The second goal was to investigate the interaction between type of treatment and gender. A third goal was to determine if any effects of Reiki were long lasting.

Methods

A randomized within-subject crossover study was designed to include One hundred and twenty subjects (48 men and 72 women) with an age range from 21 to 62 years. Twelve men and 18 women were randomly assigned to each of the four treatment groups. To be included in the study a participant must not ever have had PMR, Reiki, or any type of laying-on-of-hands therapy and must have experienced pain and stress for one or more years. All participants attended 10 biweekly sessions. Outcome parameters were measured pre-test, post-test and at 3 month follow-up.

Results

Reiki significantly reduced pain, depression and state anxiety. Personality changes, such as reduction in trait anxiety, enhancement of self-esteem, and a shift toward a greater sense of internal locus of control, were evident after Reiki. Reiki was also shown effective in strengthening participants' faith in God. The results also showed that men had significantly greater reduction in depression than women, but women had significantly stronger faith in God after Reiki treatments. The follow-up showed that Reiki has a lasting effect (up to three months).

Strengths

Good number of participants. Within subject crossover study so each subject received treatment and non-treatment or placebo. Well designed and controlled except that control group and placebo group subjects were treated differently to the sham Reiki and Reiki subjects, and might therefore have been aware of their treatment assignments.

Weaknesses

Although participants were randomly assigned to groups, they were self-selected (responded to an advertisement for a Reiki study). Participants had multiple medical conditions.

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