

Healing Research

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Scientific research in the area of laying on of hands has been conducted for some time. There are now quite a few experiments that validate the usefulness of Reiki and other healing techniques. Some of the more interesting results of these experiments demonstrate that their positive results are coming from more than just the placebo effect, while others indicate that the energy is non-physical in nature in that the benefits do not diminish regardless of the distance between sender and receiver. The following are few of the more interesting studies.

This first Reiki study was published in a peer reviewed scientific journal. The study involved 45 healthy people who were divided into 3 groups of 15 each. One group received Reiki and rest, another group received placebo, Reiki, and rest. The placebo treatment was given exactly the same way as the Reiki treatments were given in the first group except that those who gave them had not had Reiki training. The third group received only rest. The study recorded a number of vital statistics, including heart rate, systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, skin temperature, and respiration rate at regular intervals.

This study revealed a significant reduction in diastolic blood pressure and heart rate in the Reiki group that didn't appear in the placebo group or the control group, thus tending to indicate that Reiki created an important effect that was not caused by suggestion. This was a small study, but the quality of its design and the positive results it produced indicates that additional larger scale studies are warranted.

The complete study ("Autonomic Nervous-System-Changes During Reiki Treatment: A Preliminary Study") was published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* Volume 10, Number 6.

Another Reiki study done at the Helfgott Research Institute at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Portland , Oregon , showed that Reiki has a measurable effect on the immune system. This study examined the effect of Reiki on the white blood cell counts of volunteers who were randomized into three groups—those who received Reiki, those who relaxed, and those who neither received Reiki or relaxation. Blood was drawn for examination before the treatment, immediately after treatment, and four hours after treatment.

The study shows that Reiki enhanced the immune system by increasing the number of white blood cells in those who received Reiki. Because this was a small preliminary study, the results provide the basis for further study of the ability of Reiki to make healthy improvements in those that receive it. Hodsdon, W., Mendenhall, E., Green, R., Kates-Chinnoy, S., Wacker, E, & Zwickey, H. The Effect of Reiki on the Immune System. Helfgott Research Institute at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Portland , Oregon , USA

Wendy Wetzel, a registered nurse describes a Reiki experiment she conducted in her paper, "Reiki Healing: A Physiologic Perspective." In her study, forty-eight people made up the experimental group while 10 made up a control group. Both groups had blood samples taken at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. The experimental group received First Degree Reiki training. The control group was not involved in the Reiki training.

The blood samples were measured for hemoglobin and hematocrit values. Hemoglobin is the part of red blood cells that carry oxygen. Hematocrit is the ratio of red blood cells to total blood volume. The people in the experimental group who received Reiki training experienced a significant change in these values with 28 percent experiencing an increase and the remainder experiencing a decrease. The people in the control group who did not receive Reiki training experienced no significant change. It is thought that changes, whether an increase or decrease are consistent with the purpose of Reiki which is to bring balance on an individual basis.

One individual experienced a 20% increase in these values. She continued to treat herself with Reiki daily and after three months, her increase had been maintained and in fact had continued to improve. This improvement was appropriate for her as she had been experiencing iron deficiency anemia.

Another study in laying on hands has also demonstrated its ability to increase hemoglobin values. A medical doctor, Otelia Bengssten, M.D. conducted an experiment with a group of 79 sick patients. Together the patients had a wide range of diagnosed illnesses including pancreatitis, brain tumor, emphysema, multiple endocrine disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, and congestive heart failure. Laying-on hands treatments were given to 46 patients with 33 as controls. The treated patients showed significant increases in hemoglobin values. The effect was so pronounced that even cancer patients who were being treated with bone marrow-suppressive agents which predictably induce decreases in hemoglobin values showed an increase. The majority of patients also reported improvement or complete disappearance of symptoms. Both this experiment and the one above, demonstrate that healers are able to induce actual biological improvements in the patients they treat rather than simply create a feeling of well-being.

Laying-on hands healing has been validated by experiments carried out at St. Vincent's medical Center in New York. The study was carried out by Janet Quinn, assistant director of nursing at the University of South Carolina. The design of this study tends to rule out the placebo effect. Thirty heart patients were given a 20 question psychological test to determine their level of anxiety. Then they were treated by a group trained in Therapeutic Touch healing. A control group of patients were also treated by sham healers who imitated the same positions as those who had training. Anxiety levels dropped 17 percent after only five minutes treatment by trained practitioners, but those who were only imitating a treatment created no effect.

Daniel Wirth of Healing Sciences International in Orinda, California conducted a tightly controlled experiment involving a healing technique. Forty four male college students received identical minor wounds deliberately inflicted by a doctor in the right or left shoulder. Twenty-three then received a healing treatment and the other twenty-one did not. The treatments were given in such a way that the possibility of a placebo effect was ruled out. All forty-four students extend their arms through a hole in the wall. In the other room, a trained healer was present for those who received healing and administered healing from a distance without touching. For those who did not receive healing, no one was present in the room. Both the students and the doctor who administered the wounds and later also evaluated their healing rate had been told that the experiment was about the electrical conductivity of the body. Neither knew that the experiment was about healing. Eight and sixteen day follow-up measurements of the rate of wound healing were done. After eight days, the treated groups wounds had shrunk 93.5 percent compared with 67.3 percent for those not treated. After sixteen days, the figures were 99.3 and 90.9. After debriefing, the students stated they did not know the true nature of the experiment

and had felt no contact with the healer. The possibility that expectations of the students caused the healing was ruled out.

Dr. John Zimmerman of the University of Colorado using a SQUID (Superconducting Quantum Interference Device) has discovered that magnetic fields several hundred times stronger than background noise are created around the hands of trained healers when doing healing work on patients. No such fields are created by sham' healers making the same movements indicating something special is happening with the trained healers. The frequencies of the magnetic fields surrounding the hands of the trained healers were of the alpha and theta wave range similar to those seen in the brain of meditators.

Dr. Barnard Grad of McGill University in Montreal, used barley seeds to test the effect of psychic healing energies on plants. The seeds were planted in pots and watered with a saline solution which is known to retard their sprouting and growth. With elaborate double-blind conditions set-up, one group of seeds were watered with saline solution that had been treated by a psychic healer. The treated saline was held by the healer in a sealed container for fifteen minutes. The other seeds were watered with untreated saline. The person watering the plants did not know which group was getting the treated saline and which was getting the untreated saline. The plants watered with healer treated saline solution grew faster and were healthier producing 25% more weight and having a higher chlorophyll content. These experiments have been replicated in Dr. Grads lab and in other laboratories as well.

Dr. Grad carried out similar experiments involving tap water and plants. Sealed containers of water were given to a psychic healer to hold and others were given to a severely depressed patient to hold. The plants watered with the healer-held water had an increased growth rate and those watered with the water held by the severely depressed patient had a decrease in growth rate compared to controls.

These experiments involving plants, in addition to confirming the non-placebo nature of psychic healing, scientifically confirm the ancient metaphysical understanding that healing energies can be stored in water for future use.

In another experiment involving psychic healer Olga Worrall, Dr. Robert Miller used an electromechanical transducer to measure the microscopic growth rate of rye grass. The device used has an accuracy of one thousandth of an inch per hour. Dr. Miller set-up the experiment in his laboratory and then left, locking the door behind him to eliminate any unnecessary disturbance. Olga, located over 600 miles away was asked to pray for the test plant at exactly 9 PM that evening. When Dr. Miller returned to the laboratory the next day, the test equipment had recorded normal continuous growth of 6.25 thousandths of an inch per hour up to 9 PM. At that time, the record began to deviate upward and had risen to 52.5 thousands of an inch per hour which was an increase of 840 percent! This increased growth rate remained till morning when it decreased but never to its original level.

The Spindrift group has done extensive research involving prayer and plants. Their results indicate that prayed for plants always grow faster and are healthier than non-prayed for plants even though the conditions are equal for both groups of plants and those doing the praying are miles away. These results were consistent regardless of the distance involved and occurred over and over. They are described by Robert Owen in his book, "Qualitative Research: The early years":

One of the interesting results of their research work is that they were best when the prayer was non-directional, that is when the prayer was simply for the plants general well-being, rather than for a specific result, such as a certain growth rate or overall height.

More experiments are being done and scientific theories are being developed to describe Reiki and other healing techniques. As we continue into the millennium, increasing interest along with more sensitive equipment will allow science to more completely understand, validate, and accept the reality of spiritual healing. As this happens, we will see increasing use of Reiki and other laying-on hands healing coming into common use by individuals for themselves and family along with its use in hospitals and doctors offices. The deeper understanding about the nature of health and the unity of all life this re-discovered age old wisdom will provide will reduce suffering and make earth a more worthwhile place to live. With this in mind, let us be encouraged to continue in the spirit of Reiki to help others and to heal the planet.

An exciting new book is now available about
scientific research on spiritual healing titled:
Spiritual Healing
Scientific Validation Of A Healing Revolution
by Daniel J. Benor, M.D.
Foreword by Larry Dossey, M.D.