

# Center for Reiki Research Study Summary

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## Reiki improves heart rate homeostasis in laboratory rats

### Reference

Baldwin, AL, Wagers, C and Schwartz, GE. Reiki improves heart rate homeostasis in laboratory rats. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 14 (4): 417-422, 2008.

### Purpose of Study

To determine whether application of Reiki to noise-stressed rats can reduce their heart rates (HRs) and blood pressures.

### Objective/goals/hypotheses

To gather data that supports the hypothesis that Reiki performed on rats prior to, and during, intentional stress-inducing situations would positively modulate heart rate and blood pressure by reducing the stress response.

### Methods

The study used three male rats each implanted with an electronic telemetric device that could monitor heart rate (HR) and mean arterial blood pressure (MAP). Each of the three rats was pair-housed in a cage with a gender and age-matched rat without a device. Each pair was subjected for 8 days to 30 minutes of white noise (90 dB) per day as a stress inducer. For the last five days, the rats received 15 minutes of Reiki prior to the noise and 15 minutes of Reiki during the noise. The Reiki was performed by two, level three, Reiki practitioners. Both before and during the noise, each practitioner performed 15 minutes of Reiki on a separate pair of rats, then both performed 15 minutes of Reiki on the last pair. On all 8 days, baseline data were recorded for 15 minutes starting at the same time each day in order to ascertain resting HR and MAP. Two weeks after the Reiki treatments, the experiment was repeated but with two students, untrained in Reiki, performing sham Reiki, all other parameters remaining the same.

### Results

After Reiki therapy, before exposure to noise, the monitored rats showed significant decreases in heart rate compared to baseline rates; there was a proportionally greater response the higher the initial heart rate. Reiki, but not sham Reiki, significantly reduced the rise in HR produced by exposure of the rate to noise. Neither Reiki nor sham Reiki significantly affected MAP. These findings help substantiate that Reiki promotes homeostasis, in this case, by reducing heart rates in both stressed and unstressed animals.

### Strengths

A controlled study that eliminated human subject variables by using monitored rats; the use of sham Reiki treatments strengthens the findings.

### Weaknesses

Small sample size limits generalization.

### Additional comments

A well thought study that helps illuminate the need for more animal-model Reiki experiments.

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