

Center for Reiki Research

Study Summary

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Personal Interaction with a Reiki Practitioner Decreases Noise-Induced Microvascular Damage in an Animal Model

Reference

Baldwin, AL and Schwartz, GE. Personal Interaction with a Reiki Practitioner Decreases Noise-Induced Microvascular Damage in an Animal Model. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 12(1):15–22, 2006.

Purpose of Study

To determine whether Reiki, a process of transmission of healing energy, can significantly reduce the deleterious effects of noise-induced stress on microvascular permeability using an animal model (Sprague Dawley rats).

Objective/goals/hypotheses

If Reiki could reduce the effects of noise on microvascular integrity in the rat, perhaps it could ameliorate the potential physiologic damage suffered by patients in noisy hospitals.

Methods

Sixteen Sprague Dawley rats were housed two per cage, two cages per room in four separate rooms. Animals in three of the rooms were subjected to 15 minutes of 90 dB white noise at 8:00 AM every day for 3 weeks, whereas the animals in the fourth room were the quiet control group.

In one noise room, the rats received daily 15-minute Reiki prior to being subjected to the noise. In a second noise room, the rats received daily 15-minute “sham” Reiki treatments administered by a student not trained in Reiki, using the same hand motions and at the same time as the Reiki practitioner in the first room. No treatment was given in the third noise room.

After three weeks, each rat was subjected to surgery to expose and flush a mesenteric vascular window that would then be perfused with fluorescently-labeled albumin after the animal was euthanized. Microvasculature was perfusion fixed so that extravasated fluorescent albumin was fixed in place. The mesenteric window was excised and then video-imaged using epifluorescence microscopy.

Videos were analyzed to determine the average number and size of fluorescent leaks for rats in each group. All data were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis.

The whole experiment was repeated with a different Reiki practitioner and different sham Reiki student in order to test whether Reiki per se was affecting the results, and finally, to test for reproducibility, the experiment was repeated with the same Reiki practitioner and sham Reiki student as used for the first repeat. All persons performing surgeries and analysis were blinded to the identity of the experimental groups.

Results

Mean numbers and areas of leaks, per unit length of venule for all noise groups, including noise plus Reiki, were significantly greater than for the quiet group. Values for noise plus Reiki and noise plus sham Reiki were both significantly less than noise alone for leak numbers. Most importantly, both for leak number and area, the values for noise plus Reiki were significantly less than those for noise plus sham Reiki and this was repeated in all experimental runs. Application of Reiki to rats that were stressed by noise significantly reduced microvascular leakage.

Strengths

This is an excellent and rigorous study that demonstrates, to statistical significance, the effect of Reiki on a measured physiological effect.

The strengths of this paper include:

- Defined, validated and quantitative treatment outcome that reflects the effect of stress on the subjects.
- Uniformity of lifestyle, diet and genetics in subjects through using study animals.
- Demonstration of repeatability.
- Use of multiple control groups, including sham Reiki, no treatment and control enables statistical comparison and clear demonstration of the effect of Reiki.

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Positive aspects

- This is an excellent study, well controlled, reproducible between experiments and between practitioners.
- THIS STUDY IS WHAT I WOULD CONSIDER THE FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORT FOR REIKI EFFECTIVENESS, GOING FORWARD.

Weaknesses

Small sample size, expected for a pilot study, just means that results support further study and are not yet generalizable. Unclear as to role of practitioner intent or psychological status vs Reiki itself.

Additional comments

This summarization does not do justice to the details of this experiment, I highly recommend reading the original paper to fully appreciate the rigor undertaken in this study. This is, without doubt, one of the strongest studies in support of measurable physiological effects of Reiki treatments.

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