

Reiki Research Review

Crawford, S.E., Leaver, V.W., Mahoney, S.D. (2006) Using Reiki to decrease memory and behavior problems in mild cognitive impairment and mild Alzheimers' Disease. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 12(2);911-913

Alzheimers' Disease is a devastating illness, and many readers will know one or more friends or family who have been affected by it. This article was an empirical study (not double-blinded) of 24 participants in Maine, USA. Of the 24, twelve were randomly selected to take part, while the remainder received no treatment. Two Reiki masters gave thirty minute, weekly treatments for four weeks. No details were revealed regarding hands-on positions or standardisation of treatment. The participants had prior knowledge of Reiki, but were thoroughly tested for behaviour, memory and feelings using well-known measuring tools. The authors also state that there were no changes to pharmacological or other therapeutic measures during the study.

Mild improvements on several measures were demonstrated after treatment. Memory-related performance and depression relief scored highest, although the results were not statistically significant. Some participants showed best results in being able to remember where they had put things, and in remembering recent events, which do have benefits for quality of life. The authors mention a number of confounding factors in the test, as well as several strengths. They query whether the results would have changed if new Reiki I or II channels had been used instead of experienced Reiki masters.

Comment

To be fair, this study is listed as a "short report", and is four pages in length. Of course a more detailed research paper would have been helpful, but it is useful to know about, but really shows that much more research is needed in this area. There were a number of things I would have liked to have known, including more about the exact treatment given to participants. There was no literature review (perhaps not needed in a short report), and only four references, so without further probing, it is hard to gauge the extent of research in this area of Reiki use.

This would be an excellent paper on which to argue for further research. For anybody who may have contacts in a research facility dealing with dementia, it could just be the catalyst for those in authority to decide to run a study. It would be good to hear from Reiki channels who are working on people with dementia. Anecdotal evidence can be useful to others.

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