

Is Reiki an Effective Approach to Pain Management?

Melike Demir*

Assistant Professor, School of Health, Gümüşhane University, Gümüşhane, Turkey

Abstract

Reiki is believed to be an ancient healing practice that originated thousands of years ago. Reiki therapy has no side effects and thought to provide harmony and balance to improve physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Reiki is a form of energy therapy which will be relieve pain and stress. So this article is written for answer the question of 'is reiki an effective approach to pain management?'

Keywords: Reiki, Pain, Palliative Care

***Corresponding Author:** Melike Demir, Assistant Professor, School of Health, Gümüşhane University, Gümüşhane, Turkey; E-mail: melekdm@gmail.com

Introduction

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) describes Reiki as an energy-based touch therapy which is rebalancing natural energy flow. Energy through the practitioner's hands to the body and spreads [1, 2].

"Reiki" is composed of two words – Rei, which means God's Wisdom or the Higher Power, and Ki, which is life force energy [3, 4]. So Reiki means universal life energy [5]. Everything in the world is made up of energy, including the human body. When this energy decrease, It can cause illness or disease [6].

Reiki is believed to be an ancient healing practice that originated thousands of years ago in the Tibetan Sutras. The

practice was lost until the 1800s when Dr Mikao Usui rediscovered it and began practicing and teaching Reiki [3, 4, 7]. Than Hawayo Takata_brought Reiki to the West in 1938 an now this is implemented in the world [3, 7].

So now-a-days, 1.2 million adults and 161,000 children in the US had received one or more sessions of energy healing such as Reiki during the previous year, and 15% of American hospitals offer Reiki as a service of care [8]. In Turkey Reiki is a practice only recently started to be noticed. There are few practitioners and not too much research done about it.

Universal energy sources that can strengthen the body's ability to heal itself, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain and stress. The practitioner sends to energy with or without light touch [6, 9, 10]. Reiki is thought to provide harmony and balance to improve physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being [5, 11]. Reiki therapy has no side effects [4, 12]. So this article is written for answer the question of 'is reiki an effective approach to pain management?'

Methods

Articles searched to Pubmed and Google Scholar. This review includes to randomised controlled trials. The following search limits were utilized: (a) English only; (b) random assignment, either placebo or control; (c) peer-reviewed journal; (d) abstracts; (e) full text. Only 9 articles met the established review criteria.

Results and Discussion

Research outcomes associated with relaxation, decreased anxiety, improved well-being, pain management, and

healingn [2]. The Reiki studies consisting mostly of descriptive studies, case reports and randomised controlled trials (RCTs) conducted with a small sample of participants. Authors of a recent systematic review concluded that current evidence is insufficient to suggest that Reiki is an effective treatment [13].

Olson et al. [14] conducted a control trial with one group of patients receiving Reiki and opioid medication and the control group receiving opioid medication and rest. The group that received Reiki plus the opioid reported a mean decrease of 1.2 points on the visual analogue scale compared with a mean decrease of 0.3 in the opioid plus rest group. No significant difference was found in the use of pain medication between the groups [14]. So in this study's conclusion Reiki is not effective on pain.

Two studies showed no effect of Reiki in reducing pain in patients with fibromyalgia [15] and osteoarthritis [5]. Although, Dressin and Singg reported a significant reduction of pain, depression, and anxiety in chronically ill people who received Reiki treatments compared with sham Reiki [16]. And than a study which done with 118 patients receiving any kind of chemotherapy, demostered to reiki reduction of 50% in mean scores of pain after each treatment [4]. Wirth et al demonstrated significant postoperative pain reduction after tooth extraction in patients who received both Reiki and Lashan therapy [17].

A study demonstrated that Reiki significantly improved preoperative relaxation and reduced postoperative pain in women having hysterectomies. In this study control group received traditional nursing care, and the experimental group received traditional nursing care plus three 30-minute sessions of Reiki. The experimental group reported less pain and requested fewer analgesics [18]. Another randomised, double-blinded study showed that Distant Reiki had no significant effect on pain following an elective C-section [19]. These studies showing that Reiki reduce pain or not reduce pain. So there is no evidence to Reiki decrease pain's level.

Conclusion

There is no conclusive evidence to Reiki is effective on pain. Reiki therapy has no side effects and reiki to suggest for

reducing pain, fatigue, and other symptom management in a guidelines [20].

References

1. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Reiki: an introduction. Retrieved from: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/reiki/introduction.htm>; 2009.
2. Vitale A (2009). Nurses' Lived Experience of Reiki for Self-care Holist Nurs Pract 23(3):129–145.
3. Coakley A & Barron A (2012). Energy Therapies in Oncology Nursing. Seminars in Oncology Nursing 28(1):55-63.
4. Birocco N, Guillame C, Storto S, et al (2012). The Effects of Reiki Therapy on Pain and Anxiety in Patients Attending a Day Oncology and Infusion Services Unit. American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Medicine 29(4):290-294.
5. Park J, McCaffrey R, Dunn D, Goodman R (2011). Managing Osteoarthritis Comparisons of Chair Yoga, Reiki, and Education (Pilot Study) Holist Nurs Pract 25(6):316–326.
6. Cuneo C, Cooper M, Drew C, et al (2011). The Effect of Reiki on Work-Related Stress of the Registered Nurse. Journal of Holistic Nursing 29(1): 33-43.
7. Whelan KM, Wishnia GS (2003). Reiki therapy: the benefits to a nurse/Reiki practitioner. Holis Nurs Pract 17(4):209-17.
8. Barnes PM, Bloom B, Nahin R (2008). CDC National Health Statistic Report # 12. Complementary and alternative medicine use among adults and children: United States, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics; December 2008.
9. Demir M, Can G, Çelenk E (2013). The Effect of Reiki at Symptom Management of Oncology, Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention 14(8): 4931-4933.
10. Toms R (2011). Reiki Therapy A Nursing Intervention for Critical Care. Crit Care Nurs Q 34 (3): 213–217.

11. Vitale AT (2007). An integrative review of Reiki touch therapy research. *Holist Nurs Pract* 21(4):167-179.
12. Bullock M (1997). Reiki: a complementary therapy for life. *Am J Hosp Palliat Care* 14(1):31-33.
13. Lee MS, Pittler MH, Ernst E (2008). Effects of Reiki in clinical practice: A systematic review of randomized clinical trials. *International Journal of Clinical Practice*, 62, 947-954.
14. Olson K, Hanson J, Michaud M (2003). Other complementary therapies, reiki effects on pain and quality of life in advanced cancer patients. *J Pain Symptom Manage* 26:990-997.
15. Nassim Assefi, Andy Bogart, Jack Goldberg, and Dedra Buchwald (2008). *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 14(9): 1115-1122. doi:10.1089/acm.2008.0068.
16. Dressin LJ, Singg S (1998). Effects of Reiki on pain and selected affective and personality variables of chronically ill patients. *Subtle Energies Energy Med* 9:51-82.
17. Wirth DP, Brenlan DR, Levine RJ, et al (1993). The effect of complementary healing therapy on postoperative pain after surgical removal of impacted third molar teeth. *Complement Ther Med* 1:133-138.
18. Vitale AT, O'Connor PC (2006). The effect of reiki on pain and anxiety in women with abdominal hysterectomies: a quasi-experimental pilot study. *Holist Nurs Pract* 20:263-272.
19. vanderVaart S, Berger H, Tam C, et al (2011). The effect of distant reiki on pain in women after elective Caesarean section: a double-blinded randomised controlled trial. *BMJ Open* 1: doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2010-000021
20. Deng G, Frenkel M, Cohen L, et al (2009). Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines for Integrative Oncology: Complementary Therapies and Botanicals. *Journal of the Society for Integrative Oncology* 7(3): 85-120.