



The State of the Science on Biofield Therapies: A Scoping Review and Interactive Evidence Map on Clinical Studies

[Meredith Sprengel](#), PhD, Program & Research Director, Subtle Energy Funders Collective

Co-Authors:

Lynn Teo, DAc

Natalie Dyer, PhD

Samantha Allen, MAC

Noortje IJssennagger, PhD

Cindy Crawford, BA

Objectives: This scoping review aimed to comprehensively examine existing research on biofield healing therapies, documenting various aspects including populations, medical conditions, outcomes, methods, and sample characteristics. A secondary objective was to make the findings accessible through a searchable and dynamic evidence map.

Methods: Searches were conducted on PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, and PsycInfo databases from inception through December 2022, with an update in January 2024. The review included peer-reviewed interventional studies in English involving humans undergoing biofield therapy from practitioners, encompassing randomized and non-randomized controlled trials as well as pre-post studies. Data extraction involved capturing citation details, study design specifics, sample characteristics, intervention and comparator details, outcomes, and result direction. Synthesized evidence was structured into tables and an online evidence map.

Results: Of the 353 studies meeting the inclusion criteria, there were 255 randomized controlled trials, 35 controlled clinical trials, and 63 pre-post studies. The most frequently studied biofield therapies included Reiki (n=88), Therapeutic Touch (n=71), and Healing Touch (n=31). Roughly three-quarters of the studies reported positive or mixed results, while a proportion reported negative or non-significant findings, with a minority not reporting result direction. An evidence map illustrating these findings was developed, and all the included studies along with the extracted data can be accessed at: <https://www.biofieldsciencemap.org>.

Conclusions: While the research has shown promise for various conditions and symptoms, understanding mechanisms remains a gap. Inconsistent reporting on interventions limits progress by hindering replication and comparability across studies. Advancing research requires exploring mechanisms and adhering to biofield reporting guidelines (BiFi REGs).