Small-Scale Pilot Research Studies at a University Reiki Club

Edward Fox, Emeritus Professor of Computer Science, Virginia Tech

Since March 2003, at Virginia Tech there has been a student-run Reiki Club during academic semesters. This paper summarizes 4 pilot research studies, that might motivate larger studies that will benefit from lessons learned.

Overview of studies:
1. Infrared photography:
Objective: To assess heating of hands from Reiki.
Methods: Reiki practitioners and recipients, in separate rooms, were assessed with an infrared camera as baseline and after sending energy.
Results: In most cases, practitioner hands warmed and, in some cases, so did recipients.

2. Growth of virus:
Objective: To assess if Reiki applied to petri dishes with virus would reduce growth.
Methods: Petri dishes with virus were randomly assigned to no treatment / Reiki treatment.
Results: There was some reduction of virus spread in the treated dishes, but temperature effects of removal from the controlled environment may have confounded findings.

3. Hip dysplasia treatment:
Objective: To assess if Reiki would improve the gait of dogs with hip dysplasia.
Methods: The gait of dogs was assessed using a floor pressure plate before and after Reiki treatment.
Results: Changes were mixed since some owners interrupted the treatment sessions.

4. EEG effects:
Objective: To determine if Reiki effects the EEG of a recipient.
Methods: After baseline recordings of a Reiki Master and recipient, each with an EEG helmet, there were 6 two-minute random Reiki/no-Reiki sessions.
Results: Subjective assessments matched exactly with Reiki/no-Reiki timing. EEG data analysis awaits help from experts.

Conclusions: Small pilot studies show promise but require follow-up.