



Letter to the Editor

Letter to the editor concerning critique by Thomas J. Wheeler of “The effects of Reiki application on sleep and quality of life in patients with epilepsy”

Dear Dr. Mula,

The Center for Reiki Research (CRR) is writing in response to the Letter to the Editor by Thomas J. Wheeler [1] regarding the article “The effects of Reiki application on sleep and quality of life in patients with epilepsy” [2]. The CRR is a US-based, international non-profit group that reviews, ranks, summarizes and catalogs peer-reviewed research on Reiki and advocates for scientific rigor in Reiki research (see: www.centerforreikiresearch.org).

In his letter, Dr. Wheeler criticizes the quality of the cited paper for several reasons including the lack of blinding of the participants assigned to Reiki and control groups and the fact that the Reiki group received a great deal of individual attention, including touch, not given to the controls. This could have provided real psychological benefits, resulting in improved sleep and quality of life.

The CRR agrees with these aspects of Dr. Wheeler’s critique. In fact, we noted the same weaknesses in our own evaluation of the paper (available at <https://www.centerforreikiresearch.org>) using CRR’s “Touchstone Process” [3], in which we pointed out that the study lacked a sham control group (i.e., administering an identical touch-based protocol but without any intent to transmit Reiki). Inclusion of a sham Reiki group would have allowed the participants to be blinded regarding their group assignment (Sham Reiki versus Reiki) and would have strengthened the study.

Reiki has been shown to reduce stress and improve wellbeing but it is not yet universally accepted as a validated medical treatment, partly due to an apparent lack of understanding among some Reiki researchers about how to rigorously design and properly report their studies.

CRR Board Member, Ann Baldwin, recently co-authored “Biofield Therapies: Guidelines for Reporting Clinical Trials” [4] which outlines the steps required to produce scientifically sound research papers. While this article focuses on reporting biofield studies, the guidelines are

applicable to *designing* studies as well. As a respected journal in this discipline, and to improve the quality of published papers on Reiki and other biofield therapies in the future, CRR recommends augmenting your “Instructions for Authors” with a copy of, or reference to, these guidelines.

CRR’s mission is to validate and foster the acceptance of Reiki biofield therapy as an integrative healthcare practice. Only rigorous, scientifically robust studies can provide the evidence necessary to support the use of this low risk, non-invasive modality in clinical settings.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

References

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- [3] Baldwin AL, Vitale A, Brownell E, Scicinski J, Kearns M, Rand W. The touchstone process: an ongoing critical evaluation of Reiki in the scientific literature. *Holist Nurs Pract* 2010;24(5):260–76.
- [4] Hammerschlag R, Sprengel M, Baldwin AL. Biofield therapies: guidelines for reporting clinical trials. *Explore* 2024;20(2):196–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2023.08.001>.

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