



Impact of Distant Reiki on Anxiety of Dog-Caregiver Dyads: Pilot, Randomized, Single-Blinded, Multicenter Trial

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Anxiety is a prevalent behavioral concern in dogs, increasingly understood within the dog–caregiver dyad, with caregiver anxiety and depression predicting anxiety-related behaviors in dogs, making the dyad the most appropriate unit of treatment. Affecting 14–28% of the canine population, anxiety-related conditions are an important cause of veterinary visits, relinquishment, and euthanasia. Biofield therapies like Reiki, a Japanese stress-reduction therapy delivered in person or remotely, show promise as a complementary approach, with studies demonstrating significant anxiety reductions in humans, suggesting potential benefit for both dogs and caregivers together.

Objectives: This pilot single-blinded, sham-controlled, multicenter randomized clinical trial aimed to investigate the effects of distant Reiki on anxiety in dog–caregiver dyads.

Methods: Sixty-two dyads were assigned to four groups: dog only treated, both treated, caregiver only treated, and Sham Reiki. Anxiety was assessed at baseline and after each of the three weekly 30-minute sessions using the Lincoln Canine Anxiety Scale (LCAS) and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) questionnaires.

Results: A significant main effect of time was observed for both dogs ($p < .001$) and caregivers ($p < .001$), with anxiety decreasing across all time points. No significant between-group differences were detected, and the dog–caregiver correlation was not significant; however, consistent reductions across the dyad suggest potential dyadic effects.

Conclusions: Although this study had some limitations, these preliminary findings suggest Reiki may have beneficial effects on anxiety in both dogs and caregivers, warranting further research to more accurately assess its effectiveness in veterinary medicine.