



HEAL-SLE (*Holistic Energy for Alleviating Lupus Symptoms*): A Nurse-Led Virtual Reiki Pilot Study Evaluating Feasibility, Acceptability, and Preliminary Clinical Outcomes in Adults With Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

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Background: Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by pain, fatigue, psychological distress, and unpredictable flares that impair quality of life. Although pharmacologic treatment remains central, stress and persistent symptoms may remain insufficiently addressed. Research on virtual Reiki in SLE is limited.

Objectives: To evaluate the preliminary efficacy, feasibility, acceptability, and adherence of an eight-week virtual Reiki intervention for adults with SLE.

Methods: HEAL-SLE study is an ongoing, nurse-led, single-site, pre/post pilot study conducted at an academic medical center. Twenty adults with SLE receiving standard care participated in eight weekly 20-minute virtual Reiki standardized sessions delivered by certified Reiki practitioners. Pain and lupus-specific quality of life were assessed at baseline, Week 4, and Week 8 using the Visual Analog Scale and LupusQoL. Surveys and practitioner logs assessed acceptability, perceived benefits, adherence, and willingness to continue Reiki as part of their care.

Results: Ten participants have completed the intervention to date. Analysis of pain and LupusQoL outcomes are ongoing. Among participants who completed, 88.9% reported being very or extremely satisfied, comfortable receiving Reiki virtually, likely to continue Reiki if incorporated into lupus care, and willing to recommend Reiki to others with SLE. Qualitative feedback describes improvements in relaxation, stress, anxiety, fatigue, sleep, pain, concentration, and overall well-being. Financial cost was the primary barrier to continued use.

Conclusions: Preliminary findings suggest high acceptability of standardized virtual Reiki among adults with SLE. Participant-reported benefits and forthcoming analyses of pain, quality of life, adherence, and feasibility will inform future randomized controlled studies.