



Reiki as an Integration Practice During Esketamine Treatment for Refractory Depression: A Comparative Case Study

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Objective: To consider the potential role of Reiki in supporting therapeutic experiences during esketamine treatment for refractory depression. While the importance of preparation, setting, and integration is well established in ketamine- and psychedelic-assisted care, Reiki has not been explored as a supportive or synergistic practice within this context.

Methods: A comparative case study was conducted involving two adult female clients receiving intranasal esketamine in an outpatient psychiatric setting over approximately 6-8 months. One client elected to receive Reiki during treatment sessions, while the second received standard supportive care without Reiki. Clinical observations, treatment progression, and client reflections were reviewed to identify emerging patterns related to emotional regulation, insight, and integration.

Results: The client who incorporated Reiki reported an expanded capacity to experience conflicting emotions without becoming overwhelmed, resolution of suicidal ideation, increased self-awareness, and sustained improvement while remaining at a 56 mg esketamine dose. The comparison client reported modest improvement in motivation but persistent fatigue and depressive symptoms despite escalation to an 84 mg dose. Given differences in diagnoses and clinical presentation, no causal relationship can be inferred.

Conclusions: These observations suggest Reiki may serve as a beneficial integration practice by supporting relaxation, therapeutic presence, emotional processing, and meaning-making during esketamine treatment. Comparative case studies such as this may inform future descriptive and qualitative research exploring Reiki's role in enhancing the therapeutic container and integration process during periods of increased psychological flexibility.