

Researcher Demonstrates Non-Traditional Therapy is Effective as Pain Management

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(PhysOrg.com) -- More than 30 years ago the United States began embracing the theory, clinical practice and research of ancient Asian medical practices including non-contact therapeutic touch (NCTT). Now, according to a study at the University of Missouri, researchers discovered that 73 percent of patients receiving NCTT experienced a significant reduction in pain, had fewer requests for medication, and slept more comfortably following surgery.

An intentionally directed process of energy modulation to promote healing, NCTT allows practitioners to channel life energy through their hands to patients in a four-phase process. The four phases - centering, assessment, “unruffling” the field and intervention - allow a restoration of balance that enables ailing individuals to heal themselves. However, acceptance of the ideas that the human body is an energy-producing organism and that energy can be directed to benefit health is critical said Guy McCormack, lead researcher for the study and chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science in the MU School of Health Professions.

In order to discover the effectiveness of NCTT, McCormack studied 90 patients receiving occupational therapy post-surgery and divided them into an experimental group where non-contact therapeutic touch therapy was given, a placebo group where a metronome acted as the treatment, and a control group where the participants did not receive any form of rehabilitation. When describing non-contact therapeutic touch, McCormack said the process involves physics and human energy fields.

“There seems to be some subliminal aspects we are not aware of that may have to do with the connectivity between people,” McCormack said. “People don’t question how you can text someone, transmit messages through computers, or visual images through televisions; thus the belief system is very powerful. If people believe that NCTT is going to be beneficial and are knowledgeable of it, it will be beneficial.”

While the participants receiving non-contact therapeutic touch had considerable reductions in pain, patients in the placebo and control groups experienced an increase in pain perception due to the mechanical intervention of the metronome and chance.

“Although it is difficult to introduce this form of therapy into medical settings, more and more hospitals are using complementary therapies like NCTT because consumers are interested in abandoning pharmacological solutions for pain, and instead are interested in harnessing their own capacity to heal through an inexpensive and cost-effective process,” McCormack said.

Provided by University of Missouri

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