



Safyre Catalyst 
Energy Work Research

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Energy Work

Definition

Energy healing therapy (energy work) is defined by the National Health Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)¹ as the channeling of healing energy through the hands of a practitioner into the client's body to restore a normal energy balance and, therefore, health. It is included under the designation of complementary and alternative health care and medical practices (CAM). CAM is a group of diverse health-related disciplines, practices, and products that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine.

Energy work supports the body's natural healing process, one's ability to self-balance and self-heal. It involves intention, such as the practitioner centering with the deep, gently, conscious breath, and placement of hands in specific patterns or sequences either on the body or above it. At the core of the therapy, the human being is a multi-dimensional energy system that can be affected by another to promote well-being².

Energy work is not a cure since it may not eliminate the signs or symptoms of disease, but instead is the process of bringing together the multi-dimensional energy system including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational, leading to an integration and balance of the body.³

Prevalence of CAM

CAM is used by many in the United States to treat health problems and promote better health. Data from National Health Interview Surveys, developed under NCCAM leadership and conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), show that nearly 40 percent of adult Americans

¹ The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2011 NCCAM is the Federal Government's lead agency for scientific research on CAM. NCCAM's mission is to define, through rigorous scientific investigation, the usefulness and safety of complementary and alternative medicine interventions and their role in improving health and health care. Scientific evidence from NCCAM-supported research informs decision making by the public, by health care professionals, and by health policymakers regarding the use of CAM interventions and their integration into strategies for better health care and promoting health

² MacIntyre, B., Hamilton, J., Fricke, T., Wenjun, M., Mehie, S., & Michel, M. 2008

³ Pierce, B. 2007.

and 12 percent of children are using some form of CAM. These data also show that Americans spent \$33.9 billion out-of-pocket for CAM in 2007. This accounted for approximately 1.5 percent of total health care expenditures, but more than 11 percent of total out-of-pocket health care expenditures. The data also suggest that CAM use is very often for self-care, i.e., not under the advice or supervision of a health professional. In 2007, 38.1 million adults made an estimated 354.2 million visits to CAM practitioners at an estimated out-of-pocket cost of 11.9 billion dollars.⁴

The nursing profession recognizes energy work (healing touch) as a nursing therapy. Beginning in 1989 the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA) offered continuing education programs. In 1996 it was endorsed as a program for AHNA through Healing Touch International, Inc. Today the number of programs is continuing to grow and becoming more accepted across the industry by nurses and nurse practitioners⁵.

Coursework for healing touch practitioners is often based on the work of Barbara Brennan. “Barbara Brennan is considered one of the leading pioneers in Western energy medicine and many consider her work the standard in the field.”⁶

“A pioneer and innovator in the field of energy consciousness, the former NASA physicist has been researching and exploring the Human Energy Field and realms of human consciousness for more than 30 years. She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy, a Doctorate of Theology, a Master's Degree in Atmospheric Physics, B.S. in Physics, and worked as a research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. She is also a graduate of the Institute of Core Energetics and a Senior Pathwork® Helper. The Barbara Brennan School of Healing offers a four year college degree and master's level preparation for energy practitioners. Currently there are graduates in all fifty states and representatives from fifty-three international countries.”⁷

⁴ National Health Statistics Reports July 30, 2009.

⁵ Wardell, D., & Weymouth, K. F. 2004

⁶ Thomas, 2010

⁷ Barbara Brennan School of Healing.

Effect of Energy Work on Specific Clinical Conditions

Research demonstrates that energy work has a beneficial impact on patient outcomes.

Coronary Artery Bypass

In the United States approximately 600,000 people have coronary artery bypass surgeries performed with costs totaling \$25.3 billion dollars each year. This surgery is among the most common operations performed in the world and accounts for more resources in cardiovascular medicine than any other single procedure. The outcomes of surgery dramatically change an individual's lifestyle and social activities. A study completed between September 1999 and November 2002 at St. Joseph's Hospital, a community hospital in St. Paul, MN measured the effectiveness of healing touch on coronary surgery patients.⁸

There were three groups in the study, a healing touch intervention group, partial intervention or visitor group, and a control group receiving no additional intervention. Each group received the same care from hospital staff, however the healing touch group received preoperative education on healing touch and three healing touch interventions – the day before surgery, immediately prior to surgery, and the day after surgery. Two certified healing touch specialists, both registered nurses, provided all the sessions.

The results of the study indicated two key areas, anxiety level and length of stay, which showed significant difference during the patient stay for coronary surgery. Although there was no significant difference, atrial fibrillation, a well-recognized postoperative complication that usually requires additional treatment and longer hospital stays was seen in the control group and not in the healing touch group.

The anxiety scores for the patients in the healing touch group were significantly lower than the other two groups. It was noted that these individuals did not report their true anxiety level when entering the study as they did not know what a relaxation state was. If they had known and reported this prior to indicating their anxiety level the difference

⁸ MacIntyre, B., Hamilton, J., Fricke, T., Wenjun, M., Mehie, S., & Michel, M. 2008

between the groups could have potentially been larger, showing an even stronger correlation between healing touch and anxiety levels.

The healing touch patients had on average one day less stay for inpatient services. Statistics on the length of stay and charges per discharge can be used to calculate potential costs saving related to reduced length of stay.

State statistics - 2009 Minnesota ⁹

**Outcomes by patient and hospital characteristics for
 Diagnosis Related Group
 234 Coronary bypass w cardiac cath w/o mcc**

	Total number of discharges	LOS (length of stay) days (mean)	Charges, \$ (mean)
All discharges	547 (100.00%)	8.1	92,161
Location Metropolitan	547 (100.00%)	8.1	92,161

One Day Hospital Stay (Charges/ LOS)	\$11,377.90
Cost of Energy Work (3 sessions/\$200 per)	\$600.00
Savings per discharge	\$10,777.90

Total potential cost savings for all discharges would be **\$5,895,511.30**.

Musculoskeletal disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders are one of the most common human afflictions. This disorder affects all age groups and frequently causes disability, impairments, and handicaps. They consist of a variety of different diseases that cause pain or discomfort in the

⁹ State statistics from HCUP State Inpatient Databases 2009, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), based on data collected by the [Minnesota Hospital Association](http://www.mnha.org) and provided to AHRQ. Values based on 10 or fewer discharges or fewer than 2 hospitals in the State statistics (SID) are suppressed to protect confidentiality of patients and are designated with an asterisk (*).

bones, joints, muscles, or surrounding bone structures, and can be acute, chronic, focal, or diffuse.

Individuals with various problems ranging from back pain, back injuries, joint pain and injuries, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis have shown improvements in different areas. Strong circumstantial evidence of the benefit of healing touch exists because significant improvements occurred in a comparatively short period of time after patients have endured the condition for a long period of time. Also, those patients who had the most severe symptoms coming into the study showed the greatest improvements from the healing touch.¹⁰

The healing touch therapy used as an adjunct to standard medical treatment, reduces the intensity and significance of pain reported by patients with previously severe intractable pain. The healing therapy may provide a useful non-pharmacological ancillary for patients experiencing adverse effects from analgesics or anti-inflammatory drugs.¹¹

A study was conducted at Fairview Southdale Hospital, to determine the effectiveness of healing touch (Brennan treatments) on total joint replacement of the knee or hip. Participants were divided into a control group (27 patients) where no treatment was received and the subject group (27 patients). Patients in the subject group received 4 treatments: 1 preoperative, one immediately post operatively, 1 day post-operative and 2 day post-operative. Assessments were made by nursing and physical therapy staff. Patients experienced improved outcomes in the areas of pain control, sleep quality and quantity, range of motion, strength and endurance, and incisional healing.¹²

Cancer

Research has shown that the use of healing touch has allowed individuals to become more relaxed, have a decrease in pain, fatigue, and overall a higher level of happiness and enjoyment in their lives despite the difficulty of living with cancer. Practitioners

¹⁰ Felson, 2002

¹¹ Weze, C., Leathard, H. L., & Stevens, G. 2004

¹² Nelson, SK. 2004-2005

using healing touch have greatly impacted cancer patients in a multitude of ways by allowing them to live a higher quality of life from their original state. This shift has moved cancer patients from their current mental state to a more positive daily outlook without dwelling on the negative aspects of cancer.¹³

Mental Health Disorders and Psychological Stress

Anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health disorders encountered in primary care. Depression within primary care typically last for 12 to 20 weeks. Individuals with psychological stress resulting from bereavement, major life events or stressors in the external environment have been associated with the depressive disorders. Although evidence of the efficacy of antidepressants is robust, current pharmacotherapeutic management of depression is frequently imperfect due to dosage inaccuracy, tolerance of the individual based on conditions and the side effects. Depression is now conceptualized as a syndrome with biological, psychological, and social influences around the individual and therefore more likely to respond to a multidimensional treatment strategy including the healing touch.¹⁴

Research carried out at the Centre for Complementary Care in Cumbria (The Centre) demonstrated the impact of healing touch on the improvement in depression and psychological disorders among 147 individuals. Participants were divided based on the severity level in stress, pain, panic, fear, anger, sleep disturbance and coping ability at the time of entry. Following the treatment, the most substantial improvement was seen in those with scores indicating the greatest severity at entry in all areas. Individuals who indicated mild entry scores did not see significant statistical changes.¹⁵

The main findings in the study shows that healing by gentle touch, when used alone or in addition to any conventional medical treatment, is a safe and effective method of improving psychological well-being in people with psychological problems of the varieties indicated in this study. The improvements in sleep patterns with the individuals

¹³ Pierce, B. 2007

¹⁴ Weze, C., Leathard, H. L., Grange, J., Tiplady, P., & Stevens, G. 2007.

¹⁵ Weze, C., Leathard, H. L., Grange, J., Tiplady, P., & Stevens, G. 2007.

greatly improved, since they are highly relevant to patient with depression and anxiety. The improved sleep is likely to have an increase in the human energy which probably improved their ability to cope.¹⁶

Effect of Energy Work for Employees

Health care professionals could benefit from the use hands on energy healing. The nursing profession is a high risk and stressful which has adverse effects on quality of care and employee turnover. Nursing leaders play an important role in boosting morale and reducing the professional burnout rate. Strategies to help reduce the burnout rate are important and desirable, because training that reduces stress could improve job performance and patient satisfaction, reduce nursing turnover, and improve unit morale.¹⁷

Nursing staff who received healing touch training have seen improvements in self-reported well-being and in autonomic nervous system functions. The study indicated that nurses saw significant decreases in self-reported stress, depression, and anxiety and significant improvements in relaxation, well-being, and sleep with the training. This study coincides with other research showing lower stress levels, depression, and anxiety with patients who receive healing touch therapy while being hospitalized.

These changes had an impact on the working environment. They found that the same nurses showed a greater sense of being calm, peaceful, and focused with patients, greater optimism about future practice, and less burnout in the profession.¹⁸

The use of healing for practitioners who work with cancer patients daily is becoming a common theme. They need to relax and take care of themselves mentally, physically, and emotionally to prevent high turnover and burn out rates in the cancer segment of medicine.¹⁹

¹⁶ Weze, C., Leathard, H. L., Grange, J., Tiplady, P., & Stevens, G. 2007.

¹⁷ Rong, T., Tegeler, C., Larrimore, D., Cowgill, S., & Kemper, K. J. 2010

¹⁸ Rong, T., Tegeler, C., Larrimore, D., Cowgill, S., & Kemper, K. J. 2010

¹⁹ Pierce, B. 2007.

Who provides the service?

Energy work is offered through individual practitioners and organizations.

In Minnesota, there are 20 individuals certified to perform Brennan Hands on Energy healing in Minnesota,²⁰ and 70 practitioners certified in healing.²¹

A few examples of organizations that provide complementary or alternative therapies are described below.

Mayo Clinic offers a few methods of alternative and complementary services. The doctors at Mayo Clinic have come to see the value of many of these alternative therapies in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual wellness in individuals and businesses. Specialists at Mayo have created a new specialty (Complementary and Integrative Medicine) to blend the best of both worlds – conventional medicine and complementary and alternative medicine. Physicians across Mayo are working to integrate the appropriate complementary therapies into a patient's overall treatment plan.²²

The HealthEast Care System in St. Paul, MN has developed the Natural Care Center. The Natural Care Center was created by a partnership between Woodwinds and Northwestern Health Science University to offer different methods of alternative and complementary medicine approaches. Within the center one option for patients is hands on energy healing. The team of practitioners works with hospital doctors and your method of recovering to build in these alternative services to accompany your beliefs.²³

Abbott Northwestern Hospital has the largest hospital-based program of its kind in the country. The Penny George Institute for Health and Healing is setting the national standards for enhancing health care through an integrative health approach. The institute does this by a set of core factors including:

²⁰ Barbara Brennan School, 2011.

²¹ Healing Touch International, 2011, Healing Touch Program, 2011

²² Mayo Clinic Department of Complementary and Alternative Medicine. 2011

²³ Natural Care Center, 2011.

- Blending complementary therapies, integrative medicine and conventional Western medicine
- Providing services to inpatients and outpatients
- Educating health care professionals
- Teaching community members about health promotion and self-healing practices
- Conducting research to identify best practices of integrative health and the impact of these services on health care costs²⁴

Conclusions

Consumer demand for complementary and alternatives continues to grow.

Health care organizations are responding to this trend by offering alternative and complementary therapies.

In addition to the rise in consumer demand, research provides compelling reasons to utilize energy work to reach better patient outcomes and realize cost savings.

²⁴ The Penny George Institute for Health and Healing, 2011.

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