Subtle Energy and the Human Biofield

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Definitions and Systematic Reviews

Subtle Energy and the Human Biofield

David Riley, MD
What is the Human Biofield?

The human biofield can be defined in terms of energy—ranging from the electromagnetic energy of the nervous and circulatory system to energy associated with chakras and meridians.
What makes up the Biofield?

The biofield is related to the various electromagnetic fields of the body that can be used as a therapeutic leverage to intentionally elicit a healing response.

A wide range of global healing traditions using physical and nonphysical touch to incorporate biofield therapies in some fashion.
The published literature

Despite funding and technological limitations the body’s biofield has been studied.

1. A systematic review evaluating changes in condition-related outcomes reached guardedly positive conclusions about the effectiveness of biofield therapies. There was moderate to strong evidence for reducing pain in chronic pain patients.

The published literature

2. A recent systematic review evaluated the quality and outcomes of randomized controlled trials of biofield therapies that assessed only nonphysical contact. In 12 of 18 trials meeting reporting and design criteria, at least one beneficial treatment outcome was observed.

3. A systematic review studied whether biofield therapists undergo changes while administering biofield therapies. Heart Rate Variability changes suggested a responsive physiology in practitioners during Reconnective Healing, Bruyere healing and Hawaiian healing; no changes were detected during Reiki or Therapeutic Touch.

References


Human Biofield or Energy System

Rauni Prittinen King RN, MIH, HNB-BC, CHTPI
What is Biofield or Energy Medicine?

Therapies that involve the intentional alteration of subtle energy to elicit a healing response
Disruption in the human energy system is viewed as a blockage of energy flow…which can lead to illness or be a result of illness.
The Human Biofield

• There is a biofield surrounding and supporting the body that is in electromagnetic communication with the larger universal field
• Research has shown that energy fields exist in plants, animals and humans
• Water is a transmitter of electromagnetic signals
• Living cells have 10,000 molecules of water for each molecule of protein. We are about 70% of water
History of Energy Healing or Vital Force

Native American
Egyptian
Greek - Pneuma
Chinese – Chi or Qi
Indian – Prana
Tibet - Lung
Australian
Japan - Ki
The healing power of touch and energy dates back to Hippocrates the Greek physician and father of modern medicine who noted that a "force flowed from peoples hands...."
Pythagoras

Pythagoras in Greece referred to the biofield as a "vital energy perceived as a luminous body that could produce cures"
Kirlian Photography
Chinese Medicine says:

Disease or illness is disharmony in Yin and Yang
Examples of Energy Therapies

- Healing Touch (Healing Beyond Borders)
- Therapeutic Touch
- Reiki
- Johrei
- Pranic Healing
- Acupuncture
- Qi-Gong
- Other hands-on healing
Human Energy System

- Chakras
  Energy Centers
- Meridians
  Energy Tracts
- Auras
  Energy Fields
Chakras

Wheels of Spinning Light
The frequency of the chakra spin generates the color
Storage of information
(All events & actions in the past)
## Seven Major Chakras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chakra</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Gland</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Adrenals</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Gonads</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Mental/Self</td>
<td>Pancreas</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Love and Forgiveness</td>
<td>Thymus</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Thyroid</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>Pituitary</td>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Pineal</td>
<td>Lilac/White</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meridians

Chi passes through these channels bringing vital energy to the body
Link between the etheric body and physical body
Conducts subtle energies from the external environment to deeper organ structures
Acupuncture opens up the meridians and energy flow
Energetic/Vibrational Beings
We are Affected by Everything

Other people, animals, plants
Sounds
Light rays
Colors
Structures, geometries
Electromagnetic fields
Thoughts
“Get Bitter or get Better”

Caroline Myss Ph.D.
“We are entering a new level in the scientific understanding of mechanisms by which faith, belief and imagination can actually unlock the mysteries of healing.” Joan Borysenko, MD
SHAMANISM
Shamanism is a healing practice that utilizes faith, belief and imagination to bring healing to individuals, communities and the practicing shaman.

Shamanism is inherently integrative and holistic:
• Teaches patient to heal self
• Family and community participate
• Emphasis on natural therapies
• Deep connection to ‘spirit’

Struthers R et al. Comp Ther Nurse Mid. 2004; 10-141-149
Traditional Shaman

Possesses special skills for tribe or village: Medicine Person
Serves a similar capacity to a physician, counselor or minister
Wounded Healer: strengthened by life’s pain
Unseen or Imaginal World is consider Real
Traditional Shaman

Utilizes plant medicine to enter altered state
Shape Shift and Heal by journeying for sick person to restore fragmented self
Supports their work with rituals and ceremony: e.g. prayers, songs, drumming, dancing
Individual receives a calling
Deep relationship & experience with the energetic power of the spirit world
Shamanism is a healing practice that utilizes faith, belief and imagination to bring healing to individuals, communities and the practicing shaman.

Shamanism is an ancient tradition of healing that sees symptoms, pain and even death as natural, non-pathological and valuable experiences.

Shamanic healing is about restoration of wholeness, not about eradication of symptoms or pain.
"We are entering a new level in the scientific understanding of mechanisms by which faith, belief and imagination can actually unlock the mysteries of healing. ” Joan Borysenko, MD
Altered States of Consciousness and Intuition

Contemplative Prayer
Meditation
Yogic Trance
Vision Quest
Shamanic Journey
Healing Touch
Reiki
“Physicians are innately shamanic. They come into medicine as a path of the heart and medical school redirects them to their brains. We can all find our way back to an integrative path of brain and heart, the neuroimaginal shamanic path.”

Lee Lipsenthal, MD
Homeopathy

David Riley, MD
What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is both a medical system and a therapy.

• As a medical system it is reported to work by stimulating the body's own healing systems through the “vital force.”

• As a therapy, homeopathically prepared medicinal products are used a variety of practitioners from different healing traditions.
The Main Principles of Homeopathy

• Individualized treatment
• Principles of “Similars” – Homeopathic medicines prescribe according to their ability to provoke “similar” symptoms in someone who is healthy (allergy desensitization is an example from conventional biomedicine.
• Homeopathic Drug provings identify a homeopathic “symptom picture.”
• Hering’s Principle of the Direction of Cure.
Acute versus Chronic Treatment

Acute and chronic diseases differ in the focus of the history required for selecting the medicine.

• In acute diseases, it is sufficient to concentrate on the history of the present illness, selecting the medicine on the basis of the primary symptoms and etiology.

• Chronic diseases often cover a patient's entire life, including family history. A constitutional predisposition to disease is included when selecting the homeopathic medication. A longer healing process is often the norm in chronic cases.
Compound Homeopathic Medications

It is not always possible in daily practice to find the "similimum", for every patient. This dilemma has led to the development of compound or complex homeopathic medicines indicated primarily for a specific clinical condition.

• Compound homeopathic medicines are combinations of two or more homeopathic medicines that have been valuable as single medicines.
• The composition is based on clinical experience, designed for synergistic action of the individual drugs.
• Compound homeopathic medicines, commonly used in low potencies, are used for a wide range of clinical conditions.
• Clinicians use these complexes to treat their patients on the basis of a clinical diagnosis.
Therapies using Homeopathic Medications

1. Classical homeopathy
2. Clinical homeopathy
3. Homotoxicology or Bioregulatory medicine
4. Anthroposophical medicine
Clinical Research

• A meta-analysis published in 1991 in the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) by Kleijnen demonstrated that 81 of the 105 trials evaluated showed homeopathy to have a positive effect. 15 of 22 trials rated “good” for methodology by the authors demonstrated homeopathy to be superior, 7 were negative.

• In 1997 *The Lancet* published a meta-analysis of 186 homeopathic controlled trials. This systematic review and meta-analysis of research evaluated the efficacy of homeopathic remedies in the treatment of hay fever, asthma, migraine headache, ear infection, upper respiratory infection, rheumatoid arthritis, diarrhea, indigestion, influenza, childbirth, varicose veins, sprains and strains, amongst many others. The Odds Ratio (OR) was 2.45 (95% confidence interval 2.05–2.93) in favor of homeopathy. The primary conclusion was that the results “were not compatible with the hypothesis that the effects of homoeopathy are completely due to placebo.”
Homeopathic Pharmacy

• Homeopathic medicines are prepared “potentization”, involving serial dilutions and succussions in steps of 1:10 or 1:100 following Good Manufacturing Procedures (GMP) developed by the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the US (HPCUS) and recognized by the FDA.

• Dilutions above 23X or 12C (corresponding to dilutions of $10^{-23}$ and $10^{-24}$ respectively) are unlikely to contain any of the starting substance. Classical pharmacological actions in vivo have been reported with dilutions as high as $10^{-22}$ mol/L and repeatedly with dilutions from $10^{-17}$ to $10^{-18}$.

• Homeopathic medicines are often used in dilutions with the original substance present.
Review of Biofield Therapies Research

Lucia Thornton, RN, MSN, ThD, AHN-BC
Biofield Therapies

- Healing Touch (HT)
- Therapeutic Touch (TT)
- Reiki
- QiGong
- Acupuncture
- Acupressure
- Homeopathy
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

- Shamanic Healing
- Jin Shin Jyutsu
- Johrei
- Polarity Therapy
- Pranic Healing
- Reflexology
- Zero Balancing
- Aromatherapy
- Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)
Review of Biofield Research (includes TT, HT, Reiki, QiGong)

- Pain
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Cancer
- Well-Being
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Dementia

(Anderson et. al. 2015)
Findings from multiple (≥ 3) rigorous clinical studies, including randomized controlled trials, showing statistically significant evidence of benefit. May also have support from basic research.

Findings from 1 to 2 strong clinical studies, showing statistically significant evidence of benefit. May also have support from basic research.

Findings from clinical studies, showing conflicting results related to benefit, or results only from basic research. (Jadad et al., 1996)
Biofield Therapies and Cancer: Good Evidence

- **Reduction in disease and treatment related pain**

- **Improvements in quality of life, fatigue, depression, anxiety and anger**
  (Cook et al, 2004; Kemper et al, 2009; Lutgendorf et al, 2010; Roscoe et al, 2005)

- **Decreased pain, stress, and fatigue in pediatric patients with cancer**
  (Kemper et al, 2009; Wong et al, 2013)

- **Improved heart rate variability and increased natural killer cells**
  (Kemper et al, 2009; Lutgendorf et al, 2010)
Biofield Therapies and Cardiovascular Disease: A Strong Evidence

- Decreased anxiety, feelings of worry, and increased feelings of satisfaction
  (Movaffaghi et al, 2006; Seskevich et al, 2004; Krucoff et al., 2005)

- Decreased length of stay and anxiety in patients undergoing coronary bypass surgery.
  (Maville et al., 2008)

- Increased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels
Biofield Therapies and Pain: **B** Good Evidence

- Decreased pain related to cancer and its treatment.
- Decreased post-surgical pain, other acute and chronic pain and patients with osteoarthritis (Anderson et al, 2015; Vitale & O’Connor, 2006; So et al, 2008; Fouladbachsh, 2012; Lu et al, 2013)

- Cochrane Review (2008):
  - Biofield therapies “may have a modest effect on pain relief”.
  - More experienced practitioners yielded greater effects in pain reduction. (So et al, 2008)
Biofield Therapies and Dementia: Good Evidence

• Decreased agitation (Hawranik et al., 2008)

• Reverse cognitive decline & improved mood (Lu et al., 2013)

• Increased measures of brain activity in regions of the brain associated with cognitive function and the stress response. (McEwen et al., 2006; Uchida et al, 2012)
## Review of RCT’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapeutic Touch</th>
<th>Healing Touch</th>
<th>Reiki</th>
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</table>
| Moderate effect on:  
  • Anxiety  
  • Stress-related conditions  
  • Pain and wound healing  
  • Well-being in cancer patients.  
  Natural Standard assigned B grades (good scientific evidence) | Some evidence for impact on:  
  • Pain  
  • Anxiety  
  • Stress  
  Natural Standard assigned C grades (unclear evidence) | Limited evidence suggesting some benefit for:  
  • Cancer quality of life  
  • Pain  
  • Fatigue  
  Natural Standard assigned a C grades (unclear evidence) |

(Potter, 2013)
Coupled versus Uncoupled State of Physical Reality

Traditional medicine’s mindset and working arena is the *uncoupled state* of physical reality. CAM’s working arena is the *coupled state*. Both sets of practitioners need to become aware of the fact that data gathering strategies that work well for the *uncoupled state physics* do not work well for the *coupled state physics* and vice versa.

Bill Tiller, 2009
Takeaways

• Biofield therapies show moderate to strong evidence for reducing pain intensity in chronic pain patients, as well as hospitalized and cancer populations.

• Potential areas for Biofield therapies include dementia, cardiovascular disease, and mental health.

• With no known side effects or potential interaction with pharmaceuticals and requiring no energy expenditure by the patient, Biofield therapies are promising adjuncts for a wide variety of symptoms associated with acute and chronic disease.
References


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References


