

# Reiki might help ease pain for cancer patients

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The ancient Japanese practice of reiki "energy healing" might help some cancer patients deal with the pain that can come with infusion therapies, new research shows. Photo by Adobe Stock/HealthDay News

The ancient Japanese practice of reiki "energy healing" might help some cancer patients deal with the pain that can come with infusion therapies, new research shows.

"Outpatients receiving reiki during infusion reported clinically significant improvements in all symptoms, high levels of satisfaction and a qualitatively positive healing experience," reported a team led by [Natalie Dyer](#), of Connor Whole Health at the University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Her team published its findings recently in the [Journal of Pain and Symptom Management](#).

The [Cleveland Clinic](#) notes that reiki "has roots in ancient Japanese healing practices and is considered a form of energy healing. It stems from the Japanese words 'rei,' meaning universal, and 'ki,' meaning vital life force energy."

The theory behind reiki is that people all have a life force and a reiki master (a practitioner trained in reiki) can channel the "universal life force energy" to you by either lightly touching you with their hands or hovering their hands above you, "channeling" energy in healthy ways.

Does reiki work beyond a possible placebo effect? That still "up for debate," the Cleveland Clinic said, and probably will be for some time to come.

In the new study, Dyer and colleagues tracked outcomes for 268 cancer patients who were receiving infusion treatments such as chemotherapy on an outpatient basis.

These treatments can come with painful side effects, such as fatigue, nausea and anxiety.

Patients were asked about their level of various forms of discomfort before and after a 15-20-minute reiki session given during their infusion treatments. In all, 392 reiki sessions were conducted.

According to patient testimonies, reiki brought about "clinically significant mean improvements in all measured symptoms," as detailed in a Connor Whole Health news release. These included noticeable declines in pain, fatigue, anxiety, nausea and well-being.

Patients also reported feeling relaxed, with positive body sensations, helpful emotions and gratitude. Most requested another reiki session, the authors noted.

The effects were only measured over the short-term, however, and more study is needed to see if any benefits linger over the longer term.

In the meantime, "this study has provided valuable insights for the effects reiki can have on our patients." [Dr. Francoise Adan](#), chief of Whole Health and Director of Connor Whole Health, said.

## More information

Find out more about reiki at [Kaiser Permanente](#).

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