

## Meta-analysis reveals that Energy Psychology has a significant effect!

Imagine a pyramid. It describes the level of evidence that a therapeutic method can achieve. At the base are simple reports of results from therapists, also referred to as anecdotal reports. This is the lowest level of evidence. Next comes systematic observations, which are a step above anecdotes, but still not research based. Case studies provide more details yet, and make us stop and take closer notice. Then there are research studies that use statistics, but the methodology doesn't make it possible to make far reaching predictions. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are solid research studies that employ gold standard methodology and statistics, suggesting far reaching predictions that the method works. And then comes the crème de la crème: Meta-Analysis, which looks at a host of RCTs and adds more muscle to predictability!

Well Energy Psychology really works! It is over seventeen years since I published *Energy Psychology* (Gallo 2005), and now a recent milestone in the scientific study of energy psychology has been reached with the recent publication of a meta-analysis in the *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*: "The efficacy of acupoint stimulation in the treatment of psychological distress: A meta-analysis".

A meta-analysis is a statistical analysis of multiple randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of a specific approach, in this case EP. Gilomen and Lee (2015) looked at all of the major studies using energy psychology protocols with acupoint stimulation, and singled out those that met highest standards. Therapeutic approaches that involve acupoint stimulation include Thought Field Therapy (TFT), Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and Energy Diagnostic and Treatment Methods (EDxTM) (Gallo 2005).

The study found that EP as a treatment does have a moderate effect size when compared with controls. There are very few therapeutic approaches that have reached this level of experimental validation. Indeed many highly respected therapeutic approaches have not even been subjected to RCTs, let alone Meta Analyses!

The importance of the Gilomen and Lee study is that:

1. It is a meta-analysis, which cannot even be considered until enough methodologically sound studies of an approach have been completed, which is now the case for Energy Psychology.
2. It continues the trend of increased scientific study of EP protocols, with increased methodological rigor.
3. The results support the efficacy of EP protocols. Feinstein (2012) reported that 15 out of 16 individual randomized control studies that reported on effect size, found large effect sizes. Gilomen and Lee's meta-analysis found that the average effect size was moderate. This distinction is due to applying different statistics to measure effect size: Feinstein used Cohen's d and Gilomen and Lee used Hedge's g. Hedge's g is a newer and more conservative measure. Most psychotherapy outcome research has used Cohen's d.

Gilomen and Lee (2015) raise the issue that, to date, there has not been a good study that has been able to single out the effect of tapping on acupoints compared to everything else in the protocol. While this is a fair argument, there is some evidence to suggest that acupoint stimulation does add a therapeutic effect to therapy (Fox & Malinowski, 2013).

Furthermore, there is the curious fact that EP treatment appears to work for a wider variety of issues: PTSD, phobias, anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and more. From where does this robustness come? It makes great theoretical sense that it comes from working with the body's energy system.

All in all, Gilomen and Lee (2015) have done energy psychology a great service. While those of us who have been applying energy psychology for years realize its effectiveness, we welcome and support extensive scientific investigation.

So with this evidence in mind, I invite you to take solace in the finding that it might not be so strange after all to invite patients to tap on specific acupoints while attuning their emotional distress to achieve relief that is actually supported by science!

Warm regards,

**FRED**

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## References

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