

Paranormal Healing, Paranormal Belief, and Physical and Psychological Well-Being

Results:

Study 1 was a partially-blinded randomized controlled clinical trial of distance healing with 60 arthritis sufferers. The results suggest that although generalized belief in healing seems to have little effect on self-reported pain, health and well-being, knowledge that one is receiving distance healing appears to be associated with improved outcomes for those who are in the healing group. Participants unaware that they were receiving healing showed no evidence of improved outcomes, thus not supporting the hypothesis that there can be health gains through distance healing alone.

Study 2 consisted of a questionnaire survey of 130 distance healers. Respondents displayed extremely high levels of spiritual connectedness, extremely permeable boundaries, frequent experience of exceptional phenomena, high levels of agreeableness and openness, and regarded themselves as driven by a compassionate desire to help others.

Study 3 used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to develop an in-depth understanding of how healees experience and attribute meaning to their distance healing encounter. Interviews were conducted with fifteen Sri Lankan healees. Five themes emerged as a result of the IPA analysis: difficulty with the concept of “telepathic” or “distance” healing; tension between traditional Buddhist healing, and modernizing Western influences; subversion of doctor/patient relationship for experienced healees; a fluid notion of time; and varieties of healing experiences. Overall, the experience of healing seemed to be almost uniformly positive for the participants in this study, even when there was no physical improvement in health.

Published Work:

Easter, A., & Watt, C. (2011). It's good to know: How treatment knowledge and belief affect the outcome of distant healing intentionality for arthritis sufferers. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 71(2), 86-89. doi: 10.1016/j.jpsychores.2011.02.003

Easter, A., & Watt, C. (2009). Paranormal healing, paranormal belief, and physical and psychological well-being in arthritis sufferers: A small scale clinical trial. In J. Palmer (Ed.), *Proceedings of presented papers: The Parapsychological Association 52nd Annual Convention*. Seattle, WA: Parapsychological Association.

Easter, A., & Watt, C. (2008). Paranormal healing , paranormal belief, and physical and psychological well-being in arthritis sufferers In S. Sherwood (Ed.), *Proceedings of presented papers: The Parapsychological Association 51st Annual Convention* (pp. 338-340). Winchester, UK: Parapsychological Association.

Researcher's Contacts:

Dr Caroline Watt
Department of Psychology
University of Edinburgh
7 George Square

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Edinburgh EH8 9JZ

UK

Phone: +44 131 650 3382

Fax: +44 131 650 3461

Email: Caroline.Watt@ed.ac.uk