



The Development of The Center for Reiki Research

BY WILLIAM LEE RAND

THE CENTER FOR REIKI RESEARCH (CRR) is the first organization dedicated to Reiki research and scientific education. From small beginnings in 1995, it has advanced through years of commitment to being a preeminent source for educating the public and the scientific communities about the current state of Reiki research.

In the Summer 1995 issue of *Reiki News*, which at the time was a 24-page newsletter, I featured an article titled “Reiki Research.” This article described several research studies and other experiments that demonstrated that the benefits of Reiki sessions are based on more than the placebo effect. Also included in the article were other scientific studies, including Reiki’s effect on hemoglobin and hematocrit values, anxiety levels in heart patients, wound healing, the improved growth of barley and rye, and other benefits of Reiki energy.

A few years later, I wrote an article titled “Reiki in Hospitals” that appeared in the Winter 1997 issue of the newsletter. It described how Reiki was gaining acceptance in hospitals across the country and included information about nurses and doctors who were providing Reiki sessions for their patients.¹

In June 2005, I started the Reiki in Hospitals website, which featured a list containing over a hundred hospitals in the US where Reiki was included as a standard part of hospital care with detailed descriptions of how each group got Reiki started in their hospital.² It also included an article titled, “How We Got Reiki Into a Hospital,” by Janet Wing and Ava Wolf.³ This list had to be curated which included checking to verify if a hospital Reiki program was still operating and adding new programs to the list. I did this work initially, but recruited a few volunteers to help after the site grew.

While access to this list was free, it required an individual to supply their email address for access to view the list. The website was very popular and eventually accumulated a list of over 33,000 email addresses of people interested in Reiki in hospitals. In addition, the number of scientific studies about Reiki was also increasing. At first, these studies could only be listed as references because the study manuscripts were owned by the author and/or the publications in which they appeared and could only be copied with permission, which was difficult to acquire.

To remedy this situation, I conceived the idea of writing our own summaries of the manuscripts which we would own and therefore be able to publish. In January 2008, I emailed our list asking for volunteers who could understand the manuscripts and write summaries. Based on this inquiry, I assembled a team of eight PhD-qualified researchers and five nurses with the necessary skills to carry out this task. These included Nancy Merrifield, Elise Brownell, Anne Vitale, Michael Torok, Jan Scicinski, Debbie Morris, Ann Baldwin, and others.

The Touchstone Process

The team self-organized and orchestrated the development of the “Touchstone Process,” a rigorous peer-reviewed method of analyzing all Reiki research studies and producing a critical set of summaries derived from an impartial and consistent process. The process made use of best practices for scientific review, and while no one step is unique to Touchstone, the scope of the included practices is unprecedented in the field of complementary and alternative medicine.⁴

On April 26, 2019, The Center for Reiki Research (CRR) was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedi-

cated to Reiki research and scientific education. Its Mission Statement declares, “The Center for Reiki Research seeks to validate and foster the acceptance of Reiki biofield therapy as an integrative healthcare practice. CRR fulfills this mission by conducting, reviewing, archiving, and promoting scientific research on the effects/mechanisms of action of Reiki.”⁵

Reiki and Pain

A significant focus for Reiki research is pain. Pain can be a serious problem and has been the source of great suffering for people throughout human history. The primary sources of pain are injury, warfare, arthritis, surgical procedures, and problems with the nervous system, such as neuropathy. Unfortunately, these sources of pain can also lead to chronic pain.

One major challenge society faces is how to deal with chronic pain effectively. Chronic pain can cause decreased quality of life, depression, and anxiety. It can interfere with concentration, learning ability, and carrying out tasks. It can also worsen existing chronic conditions, interfere with wound healing after surgery, and lead to suicidal ideation and suicide.⁶ Certainly, chronic pain is a severe problem.

The main method of dealing with chronic pain is often prescription medications. When extreme pain is involved, opioid medications are often needed to relieve the pain. When appropriately prescribed, these medications bring relief and can feel like a miracle to those suffering from pain. However, they can lead to addiction and other serious problems. In addition, when used by those with chronic pain, the dosage usually needs to be increased after a while because the body develops tolerance to the medication, making the possibility of addiction more likely.

When the prescription runs out, the patient may still be in pain. However, the prescribing doctor often will not renew the prescription to prevent addiction. In addition, if prescribed for a more extended period, the patient may have already become addicted to the medication. And for either of these cases, out of desperation, the patient may seek additional medication from black market sources.

Black market sources provide pain pills that can look just like the prescribed medication. However, because quality control in their production is often not as good as those from pharmaceutically certified manufacturers, the patient risks getting medication that has a more potent dose or one mixed with other drugs that do not interact appropriately.

Because of this, patients using alternative sources risk an overdose or adverse effects from the drug. This situation has led to the current opioid epidemic, which ranks as one of the most devastating public health catastrophes of our time.⁷ Opioid Use Disorders (OUD) affect over 16 million people worldwide, over 2.1 million in the United States, and there are over 120,000 deaths worldwide annually attributed to opioids.⁸ This is a very sad and unfortunate problem not only affecting those who have died but also their family members.

Reiki can play an essential role in creating a solution. One of the important and scientifically proven benefits of Reiki is pain reduction. The benefits of Reiki as a pain reduction method are that it does not cause addiction and has no known side effects. In addition, it is easy to use. It can be provided by trained Reiki practitioners or applied by oneself after taking a two-day class.

A physician can prescribe Reiki sessions as the primary approach, or in cases of more significant pain, along with lower dose pain medication reducing the possibility of addiction. Then after the prescription runs out, the patient can continue with Reiki sessions given by a practitioner or self-administered.

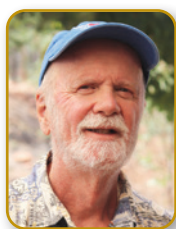
The CRR website lists thirty-one scientific studies showing that Reiki provides an adjunct to pain reduction. Research studies have a wide range of topics, for example, the effects of Reiki on pain, anxiety, and blood pressure in patients undergoing knee replacement surgery,⁹ the effect of acupressure or Reiki on the levels of pain and fatigue of cancer patients receiving palliative care,¹⁰ and the effects of Reiki on pain and anxiety in women hospitalized for obstetrical and gynecological-related conditions.¹¹

CRR Accomplishments

Various programs support CRR’s Mission Statement. The “Reiki in Hospitals Workshop” details introducing, operating, and maintaining a Reiki program within a medical setting. There are currently over 1,000 Reiki programs in US hospitals. The “Reiki in Hospitals Presentation” is a PowerPoint presentation that explains Reiki to hospital staff. It describes Reiki, how a hospital Reiki program works, its benefits to patients and hospital staff, a list of prominent hospitals that have programs, and the research studies that support the therapeutic value of Reiki. And beginning in 2021, there is a quarterly webinar series that discusses the latest Reiki research with leaders in the field.

Last, the CRR forms global research partnerships. For example, it is collaborating with Reiki Medic-Care. This UK-based non-profit organization supports the well-being of hospital doctors, nurses, and ambulance paramedics, providing Reiki treatments without cost from fully insured and certified practitioners who deliver Reiki remotely to fit in with the busy schedules of medical professionals. A current research study focuses on Reiki for healthcare professionals affected by the pandemic—conducting a single-arm pilot trial of remote Reiki for physicians, nurses, and ambulance paramedics whose physical and/or mental health had been negatively impacted by COVID-19. Measures related to pain, anxiety, depression, sleep, and well-being are being assessed.¹²

From the small newsletter’s beginnings in 1995, we can see how sustained effort at transforming healthcare and scientific understanding of Reiki through research and education has produced solid accomplishments. So, as the CRR continues to advocate for scientific rigor in all Reiki research, helping with guidelines and consultation services to other researchers and clinicians, we should be grateful that all these efforts allow us to share the blessings of Reiki with others in a valid, scientifically proven way. ■



William Lee Rand has an extensive background in the study, practice, teaching and development of Reiki. To learn more about his background, please go to www.reiki.org/users/william-rand. He can be contacted by email at william@reiki.org

Endnotes

¹ William Lee Rand, “Reiki in Hospitals,” Reiki.org, July 12, 2019, <https://www.reiki.org/articles/reiki-hospitals>.

² This list is no longer available online but can be found in the following publication: *Center for Reiki Research Booklet*, <https://www.reiki.org/store/books/center-reiki-research-booklet>.

³ Janet Wing and Ava Wolf, “How We Got Reiki Into a Hospital,” Reiki.org, July 11, 2019, <https://www.reiki.org/articles/how-we-got-reiki-hospital>.

⁴ “The Touchstone Process,” The Center for Reiki Research, <https://centerforreikiresearch.com/touchstone-process>. Registering a membership with CRR allows you access to the list of 112 summaries.

⁵ “Mission Statement,” The Center for Reiki Research, <https://centerforreikiresearch.com/mission-statement-and-history>.

⁶ “Chronic Pain: What Is It? Causes, Symptoms & Treatment,” Cleveland Clinic, *Health Library*, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/4798-chronic-pain>.

⁷ “What Led to the Opioid Crisis, and How to Fix It,” Harvard School of Public Health, *News*, February 24, 2022, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/what-led-to-the-opioid-crisis-and-how-to-fix-it>.

⁸ Alexander M. Dydyk, et al., “Opioid Use Disorder,” National Library of Medicine, *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, June 21, 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553166>.

⁹ Ann L. Baldwin, et al., “Effects of Reiki on Pain, Anxiety, and Blood Pressure in Patients Undergoing Knee Replacement Surgery,” The Center for Reiki Research, https://centerforreikiresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Baldwin2017_RRSummaryReikiForKneeReplacementSurgery.pdf.

¹⁰ Hediye Utlı, et al., “The Effect of Acupressure or Reiki Interventions on the Levels of Pain and Fatigue of Cancer Patients Receiving Palliative Care: A Randomized Controlled Study,” https://centerforreikiresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Utlı_Dinc-2023-Summary.pdf.

¹¹ Ann Bondi, et al., “Effects of Reiki on Pain and Anxiety in Women Hospitalized for Obstetrical and Gynecological-Related Conditions,” https://centerforreikiresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Bondi2020_SummaryForm.pdf.

¹² “Our Accomplishments,” The Center for Reiki Research, <https://centerforreikiresearch.com/our-accomplishments>.