

ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY

A Hierarchy of Evidence



*Updated February 2022
In reverse chronological order*

In addition to the papers in this database, more than 90 clinical trials reporting investigations of energy psychology have been published in foreign language journals. They report encouraging outcomes with a wide range of issues, such as anxiety disorders, aggression, drug addiction, dementia, depression, post-traumatic symptoms, post-operative pain, and controlling insulin levels in diabetes. These studies were not included in this database because only the abstracts had been translated, and so they could not be reviewed for methodological rigor. Also not included are English-language publications for which ACEP was unable to verify the legitimacy of the journal. In this era of predatory journals, we are not inflating our count of legitimate energy psychology studies.

Meta-Analyses of Energy Psychology (EP) Studies

Church, D., Stapleton, P., Yang, A., Gallo, F. (2018). Is tapping on acupuncture points an active ingredient in Emotional Freedom Techniques? A systematic review and meta-analysis of comparative studies. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 206(10). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30273275>

Sebastian, B., & Nelms, J. (2017). The effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Techniques in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder: A meta-analysis. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 13(1), 16-25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2016.10.001>

Clond, M. (2016). Emotional Freedom Techniques for anxiety: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *J Nerv Ment Dis*. 2016 May; 204(5):388-95. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0000000000000483

Nelms, J. & Castel, D. (2016). A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized and non-randomized trials of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) for the treatment of depression. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 12(6), 416-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2016.08.001>

Gilomen, S. A. & Lee, C. W. (2015). The efficacy of acupoint stimulation in the treatment of psychological distress: A meta-analysis. *Journal Behavior Therapy & Experimental Psychiatry*, 48 (2015) 140-148.

Systematic Reviews of EP Studies

Lee, S. H., Jeong, B. E., Chae, H., & Lim, J. H. (2021). Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) for Students' Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Oriental Neuropsychiatry*, 32(1); 165-181. <https://kiss.kstudy.com/thesis/thesis-view.asp?key=3547835>

Feinstein, D. (2018). Energy psychology: Efficacy, speed, mechanisms. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2018.11.003>

Kalla, M. (2014). The effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) for improving the physical, mental, and emotional health of people with chronic diseases and/or mental health conditions: a systemic review protocol. *JBI Database of Systemic Reviews & Implementation Reports*, 12(2). <http://joannabriggslibrary.org/index.php/jbisrir/article/view/1153/1861>

Boath, E., Stewart, A. and Carryer, A. (2012). A narrative systematic review of the effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). Staffordshire University, CPSI Monograph.

Feinstein, D. (2012). Acupoint Stimulation in Treating Psychological Disorders: Evidence of Efficacy. *Review of General Psychology*, 16(4), 364-380. doi:10.1037/a0028602

Comparative Reviews: Comparing EP with Other Therapies

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- van Ginneken, N. et al. (2021). Primary-level worker interventions for the care of people living with mental disorders and distress in low- and middle-income countries. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2021*, Issue 8. Art. No.: CD009149. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009149.pub3.
- Mavranezouli, I., Megnin-Viggars, O., Daly, C., Dias, S., Stockton, S., Meiser-Stedman, R., Trickey, D., & Pilling, S. (2020). Psychological and psychosocial treatments for children and young people with post-traumatic stress disorder: a network meta-analysis. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 61(1), 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13094>
- Mavranezouli, I., Megnin-Viggars, O., Grey, N., Bhutani, G., Leach, J., Daly, C., ... & Pilling, S. (2020). Cost-effectiveness of psychological treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder in adults. *PloS one*, 15(4), e0232245.
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Morina N., Malek M., Nickerson A., Bryant R.A. (2017). Meta-analysis of interventions for post-traumatic stress disorder and depression in adult survivors of mass violence in low- and middle-income countries. *Depress Anxiety*, 34, 679–691. <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22618>.

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Randomized Controlled Trials with Potentially Strong Generalizability

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Randomized Controlled Trials with Limited Generalizability


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Anecdotal Reports

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Definitions of the Categories Used for This List

This list of studies and review articles in the field of energy psychology is arranged in categories in order of scientific rigor, from meta-analyses and systematic reviews to anecdotal reports. One (unranked) category (Theoretical and Review Articles) follows at the end. These categories are based on a schema proposed by David Feinstein in a review article published in the APA Journal, *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*: “Energy Psychology: A Review of the Preliminary Evidence” (Feinstein, 2008).

Meta-Analyses and Systematic Reviews: Scholarly articles which review a series of studies, generally of one technique for a specific application, which critique the design, methodology, statistics and conclusions of those studies.

Randomized Controlled Study with Potentially Strong Generalizability: A formal study using established pre- and post-intervention assessments with multiple clients, including randomization, follow-up, and at least one control/comparison group with blinding those assessing the outcomes from knowledge of which subjects were in which group. These studies are well-designed and administered so that the effects of each treatment condition can be reliably compared, and generalizations to specified populations can be anticipated with reasonable confidence.

Randomized Controlled Study with Limited Generalizability: A formal study using established pre- and post-intervention assessments with multiple clients, including at least one control/comparison group and randomization, but lacking follow-up, blinding, and/or rigor in design and execution.

Uncontrolled Outcome Study: A formal study using established pre- and post-intervention assessments with multiple clients but lacking randomization and a control/comparison group.

Mixed Intervention Studies that Included a Tapping Component: Studies combining 2 or more interventions, including meridian tapping.

Mixed Method Clinical Trials that Included a Tapping Component: Quasi experimental studies combining mixed methods (e.g. quantitative and qualitative measures) exploring the effectiveness of meridian tapping.

Survey Studies of Practitioner Observations: A phenomenological study exploring practitioners' observations and experiences.

Clinical Case Study: A formal report which uses established pre- and post-intervention assessments with one subject and details one or more treatment variables.

Systematic Observational Report: An informal outcome report describing the course of treatment using a single therapeutic approach with multiple subjects.

Anecdotal Report: An informal report describing outcomes after applying a psychological method with a single individual.

In addition to the above categories, which are listed in descending order of scientific rigor, is the additional (unranked) category:

Theoretical and Review Articles

Scholarly articles which discuss theoretical considerations and plausible mechanisms of action for a treatment approach, review existing research studies, and/or discuss clinical applications based on these studies.

This list was compiled by John Freedom and David Feinstein. If you have additions, corrections or updates to this list, please email research_committee@energypsych.org. Thank you.