

ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY A Hierarchy of Evidence



*Updated August 2020
In reverse chronological order*

In addition to the papers in this database, over 50 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 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).
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- 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

- 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>
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- 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 (EP & Other Therapies)

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- Bangpan, M., Felix, L., & Dickson, K. (2019). Mental health and psychosocial support programmes for adults in humanitarian emergencies: A systematic review and meta-analysis in low and middle-income countries. *BMJ Global Health*, 4(5), e001484. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001484>

- Rometsch-Ogioun El Sount, C., Windthorst, P., Denking, J., Ziser, K., Nikendei, C., Kindermann, D., Ringwald, J., Renner, V., Zipfel, S., Junne, F. (2019). Chronic pain in refugees with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD): A systematic review on patients' characteristics and specific interventions. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, (118), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2018.07.014>
- Tarsha, M.S., Park, S., & Tortora, S. (2019). Body-Centered Interventions for Psychopathological Conditions: A Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10.
- Xiong, T., Wozney, L., Olthuis, J., Rathore, S., & McGrath, P. (2019). A scoping review of the role and training of para-professionals delivering psychological interventions for adults with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Depression & Anxiety*, 8(3).
- Purgato M, Gastaldon C, Papola D, van Ommeren M, Barbui C, Tol WA. (2018). Psychological therapies for the treatment of mental disorders in low- and middle-income countries affected by humanitarian crises. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.*, 7:CD011849. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD011849.pub2.
- Brown, R.C., Witt, A., Fegert, J.M., Keller, F., Rassenhofer, M. & Plener, P. (2017). Psychosocial interventions for children and adolescents after man-made and natural disasters: a meta-analysis and systematic review. *Psychological Medicine*, 47, 1893–1905. doi:10.1017/S0033291717000496
- 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>.
- Metcalf, O. , Varker, T. , Forbes, D. , Phelps, A. , Dell, L. , DiBattista, A. , Ralph, N. and O'Donnell, M. (2016), Efficacy of Fifteen Emerging Interventions for the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 29: 88-92. doi:10.1002/jts.22070

Randomized Controlled Trials with Potentially Strong Generalizability

- Baghini, A., Mohammadtehrani, H., Behbodi, M. Kiamanesh, A.R. (2020). Comparison of effectiveness of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Emotional Freedom Technique in reducing anxiety in patients with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Quarterly of Applied Psychology*, 13(4), 625-650. <https://www.sid.ir/en/Journal/ViewPaper.aspx?ID=709138>
- Stapleton, P., Crighton, G., Sabot, D., & O'Neill, H. M. (2020). Reexamining the effect of emotional freedom techniques on stress biochemistry: A randomized controlled trial. *Psychological Trauma*, 10.1037/tra0000563. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000563>

- Inangil, D., Vural, P., Dogan, S., & Korpe, G. (2019). Effectiveness of music therapy and Emotional Freedom Technique on test anxiety in Turkish nursing students: A randomised controlled trial. *European Journal of Integrative Medicine*, 33; 101041. doi: 10.1016/j.eujim.2019.101041
- Stapleton P, Buchan C, Mitchell I, McGrath Y, Gorton P, Carter B. (2019). An initial investigation of neural changes in overweight adults with food cravings after Emotional Freedom Techniques. *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine* 2019;4(1):14; doi:10.21926/obm.icm.1901010. <https://bit.ly/2UaSX8H>
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- Vural, P. I., & Aslan, E. (2019). Emotional freedom techniques and breathing awareness to reduce childbirth fear: A randomized controlled study. *Complementary Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 35, 224-231. doi: 10.1016/j.ctcp.2019.02.011. Epub 2019 Feb 15.
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- Nemiro, A., Papworth, S., & Palmer-Hoffman, J. (2015). Efficacy of two evidence-based therapies, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for the treatment of gender violence in the Congo: A randomized controlled trial. *Energy Psychology: Theory, Research, & Treatment, 7*(2).
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Randomized Controlled Trials with Limited Generalizability

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Uncontrolled Outcome Studies

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Anecdotal Reports

There are several hundred anecdotal reports re: positive effects reported from Energy Psychology techniques. Visit the following websites to review these:

- <http://www.remarkablerecoveries.com/>
<https://www.emofree.com/eft-article-archive.html>
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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.

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.