

Vol III Issue VIII Feb 2014

Impact Factor : 2.2052(UIF)

ISSN No :2231-5063

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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Publisher
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IMPACT FACTOR : 2.2052(UIF)

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

Golden Research Thoughts Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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REFLEXOLOGY

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Abstract:-Reflexology is the application of pressure to areas on the feet, hands and ears. Reflexology is generally relaxing and may be an effective way to alleviate stress. Several studies funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health indicate that reflexology may reduce pain and psychological symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, and enhance relaxation and sleep. Studies also show that reflexology may have benefits in palliative care of people with cancer. Reflexologists claim that reflexology also can treat a wide variety of medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and cancer. However, scientific evidence is lacking to support these claims.

Reflexology is generally considered safe, although very vigorous pressure may cause discomfort for some people.

Keywords: Reflexology , psychological symptoms , scientific evidence .

INTRODUCTION:

Reflexology, one of the most effective complimentary therapies, is a natural healing art based on the principle that there are reflex points in the feet, hands and ears and their referral areas within zone related areas, which correspond to every part, gland and organ of the body. Through application of pressure on these reflex points without the use of tools, crèmes or lotions, the feet being the primary area of application, reflexology relieves tension, improves circulation and helps in promoting the natural function of the related areas of the body. The basic principle is that activation of nerves which do not transmit pain signals, called nonnociceptive fibers, can interfere with signals from pain fibers, thereby inhibiting pain." Stimulating nerves that sense touch, heat, cold and pressure- as doe's reflexology- overcomes the action of the pain nerves.

Reflex therapy is found effective in many health problems including gynecological problems. Among this it has proved effective in complaints related to menstruation like dysmenorrhoea, amenorrhoea, premenstrual syndromes and menopausal problems

DEFINITION

Reflexology is a therapeutic method of relieving pain by stimulating predefined pressure points on the feet and hands. This controlled pressure alleviates the source of the discomfort. In the absence of any particular malady or abnormality, reflexology may be as effective for promoting good health and for preventing illness as it may be for relieving symptoms of stress, injury, and illness.

Reflexologists work from maps of predefined pressure points that are located on the hands and feet. These pressure points are reputed to connect directly through the nervous system and affect the bodily organs and glands. The reflexologist manipulates the pressure points according to specific techniques of reflexology therapy. By means of this touching therapy, any part of the body that is the source of pain, illness, or potential debility can be strengthened through the application of pressure at the respective foot or hand location.

PURPOSE

Reflexology promotes healing by stimulating the nerves in the body and encouraging the flow of blood. In the process, reflexology not only quells the sensation of pain, but relieves the source of the pain as well.

Anecdotally, reflexologists claim success in the treatment of a variety of conditions and injuries. One condition is fibromyalgia. People with this disease are encouraged to undergo reflexology therapy to alleviate any of a number of chronic

bowel syndromes associated with the condition. Frequent brief sessions of reflexology therapy are also recommended as an alternative to drug therapy for controlling the muscle pain associated with fibromyalgia and for relieving difficult breathing caused by tightness in the muscles of the patient's neck and throat.

Reflexology applied properly can alleviate allergy symptoms, as well as stress, back pain, and chronic fatigue. The techniques of reflexology can be performed conveniently on the hand in situations where a session on the feet is not practical, although the effectiveness of limited hand therapy is less pronounced than with the foot pressure therapy.

ADVANTAGES.

Reflexology can help to:-

Aid calm and relaxation

Reduce stress

Increase energy levels

Rebalance the body

Help to stabilise body weight

Aid lactation

Reduce the incidence of postnatal depression.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN REFLEXOLOGY

There are several principles that guide reflexology practice.

Reflexologists do not heal clients; the body repairs itself. The reflexologist acknowledges that he or she is a participant in the session, rather than "the healer." As with all healing arts, it is important for the practitioner to center and ground themselves and then "get out of the way." This is an acknowledgement that reflexology is offered to help bring the person back into balance so that the body can nurture and repair itself. A reflexologist knows that the purpose of this work is to help the client's body come into alignment with its own energy and ability to heal.

Humans consist of a physical and emotional body, with a mind and spirit. These are interdependent. The reflexologist takes into account all aspects of the client's being: body, emotion, mind, and spirit. A relaxed body induces calm emotions, a serene mind, and an integrated spirit.

The body responds to touch which allows healing on all levels. Frequently, clients will think they have to "focus" or "concentrate" to feel the benefits. While being quiet will frequently induce a deeper feeling in the novice, the client needs to have no special skills or habits for reflexology to work. As long as the reflexologist has knowledge, stays centered, and allows the flow of energy to occur, the client will respond positively.

It is possible for practitioners and clients to feel energy move. A reflexologist can sometimes feel the energy move from a point of pressure on feet, hands or ears throughout body. For example, when working on the spleen and gall bladder points, the practitioner can access the points at the same time, and actually feel a flow of energy. Frequently, due to the power of these two points, the client can also feel the flow.

PREPARATIONS

In order to realize maximum benefit from a reflexology session, the therapist as well as the patient should be situated so as to afford optimal comfort for both. Patients in general receive treatment in a reclining position, with the therapist positioned as necessary—to work on the bare feet, or alternately on the bare hands. A reflexology patient removes both shoes and socks in order to receive treatment. No other preparation is involved. No prescription drugs, creams, oils, or lotions are used on the skin.

PRECAUTIONS

Reflexology is extremely safe. It may even be self-administered in a limited form whenever desired. The qualified reflexologist offers a clear and open disclaimer that reflexology does not constitute medical treatment in any form, nor is reflexology given as a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The ultimate purpose of the therapy is to promote wellness; fundamentally it is a form of preventive therapy.

People with serious and long-term medical problems are urged to seek the advice of a physician. Diabetes patients in particular are urged to approach this therapy cautiously. Likewise pregnant women are cautioned emphatically to avoid reflexology during the early phases of pregnancy.

A consultation with a reflexologist is recommended in order to determine the safety and appropriateness of reflexology therapy for a specific health problem or condition.

SIDE EFFECTS

Because reflexology is intended to normalize the body functions, the therapy does not cause a condition to worsen. Most patients find that pain diminishes over the course of the therapy. It has been noted, however, that some patients experience greater discomfort in the second session than in the first session, because a significant easing of pain and tension is generally associated with the initial therapy session. As a result, when pressure is reapplied to the tender points of the foot during the second session, the sensitivity has been heightened. This increase in sensitivity may cause minor additional discomfort for the patient.

CONCLUSION

Reflexology can increase the health of the corresponding organs through the application of pressure to the reflex areas. It has been shown to benefit individuals suffering from back pain, insomnia, arthritis, sports injuries, hormonal imbalances, menstrual problems, stress, headaches, and digestive complaints.

Reflexology has been successfully used alongside medical treatment in post-operative and palliative care. It is theorized that reflexology may work partly because it works on the nervous system to effectively interrupt stress and pain signals and restore the body to equilibrium.

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