

## Reflexology Research (Kunz and Kunz 2004)

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Reflexology enthusiasts believe that Reflexology influences each of the body's internal organs and systems as well as impacting symptoms if illness. Studies have shown such assertions to be valid for much of the body as well as many health concerns. Research has shown what Reflexology can do: provide an opportunity for those seeking to age well, contend with health concerns, improve quality of life, recover from surgery, and/or address end of life issues. Reflexology has also been shown to provide loved ones with an effective, non-invasive means of showing that one cares.

Through each stage of life, the quality of life is improved with Reflexology work. Birthing mothers showed reduced labour times, colic babies quit crying, children with faecal incontinence found their embarrassing problem solved, seniors reduced pain and improved control over falls. Those seeking to age well will find that research had discovered reflexology work to be on par with exercise for lowering cholesterol. In addition, Reflexology work provides a therapeutic effect on a common pathway for aging, cancer and other diseases, the free radicals. For men, Reflexology was shown to reduce the enlarged prostate (hyperplasia) whose symptoms impact on urination including frequency, nocturia, difficulty in starting and stopping urine flow; dribbling and dysuria. For women, Reflexology was found to impact on menopause, menstruation and PMS.

### Birthing

- Women who were given reflexology found that it reduced pain and stimulated labour.
- Pregnant women who received 10 Reflexology treatments showed reduced labour times at birthing
- Women who have recently given birth lactate earlier and more satisfactorily when given foot Reflexology

### Pregnancy

- Findings indicate that stimulating the mother's feet, but not the hands, can evoke foetal activity in midge station

### Children's Health

- Infants who receive both medications and Reflexology work recover from infantile pneumonia more quickly than those who receive medication alone
- Half of colic infants who received Reflexology work reduced crying time or were cured
- An observational study of 50 children found that Reflexology successfully treated children with faecal incontinence (encopresis), secondary to constipation/stool withholding
- Hand massage applied to children with acute leukaemia receiving high dose of chemotherapy was effective in decreasing nausea, vomiting, state anxiety, pulse rate and blood pressure.
- The feet of mentally retarded children were found to be of abnormal colour and show abnormal shapes in toes as opposed to other children
- Children with cerebral palsy who received Reflexology work showed an improved growth rate over those who did not



- Mentally retarded children were shown to improve significantly in height, weight, health states, social living abilities (children with autism) and intellectual development when receiving foot Reflexology as opposed to those not receiving treatment

### Women's health

- 95% of women who experienced painful menstruation (amenorrhoea) found foot Reflexology to be effective
- Reflexology improved the symptoms of 46% of those suffering from pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Among menopausal women provided with foot reflexology, 17 (40.48%) of the women had fully recovered, 20 (47.62%) had significantly recovered, 4 (9.25%) had effective results and 1 had ineffective results at the conclusion of the study

### Men's Health

- Reflexology was found to be 87.5% effective for men experiencing impotence and 100% effective for other male sexual dysfunctions
- Reflexology work was shown to reduce the size of an enlarged prostate (hyperplasia)

### Aging well

- Foot Reflexology work was found to achieve a therapeutic effect on the common pathway for cancer, aging, and a variety of diseases, decreasing free radicals that create damage on the cell level and increasing antioxidants that counteract damage which were present in test subjects
- Individuals who receive foot Reflexology show an improvement in symptoms of high cholesterol and monoglyceride (hyperlipimia). 'If one can insist on proper physical exercise, getting reflexology treatments and a balanced diet (low fat, low calorie), it is possible to prevent and treat arteriosclerosis, coronary atherosclerotic cardiopathy, cerebral thrombosis and cerebral apoplexy efficiently'
- Not only do constipated individuals evacuate their bowels more quickly when receiving Reflexology work but individuals with normal bowel movement do also
- Foot Reflexology improves blood flow to intestines showing an influence on the organ when the technique is applied to the corresponding reflex area
- Foot Reflexology changes kidney blood flow demonstrating an influence on the organ when the technique is applied to the corresponding reflex area
- Walking on a Reflexology mat lowers blood pressure, lessens pain, and improves sense of control over falls in senior citizens
- The Reflexology and foot massage control groups experienced a significantly greater reduction in the mechanism of the heart that maintains blood pressure and homeostasis by changes in autonomic outflow (baroreceptor reflex sensitivity)
- Individuals with neck stiffness (cervical spondylosis) were found to experience a higher clinical cure rate than those treated with traction
- Foot reflexology work was found to be more effective than drugs in treating imperfect or painful digestion (dyspepsia)

- Foot Reflexology was found to avoid side effects of drugs therapy such as fatigue, sleeplessness and gastrointestinal symptoms in treating itching skin inflammation (neuro-dermatitis)
- Foot reflexology was found to be more effective than medication in effecting low white blood cell count (leukopenia)

### Senior health

- ‘...older adults experienced significant improvements in mental and physical well-being, including reduction in blood pressure and pain levels... considerable improvements in their ability to perform ‘activities of daily living’, increased psychosocial well-being, and significantly reduced daytime sleepiness and pain. Participants also reported greatly improved perceptions of control over falls and had reductions in resting diastolic blood pressure. Perhaps most importantly for those who work with the elderly, the cobblestone-mat walking meets a need ‘to developed simple, convenient, and readily accessible exercise programs that will reduce health problems and improve the quality of life of aging population’. Exit interviews indicated that participants ‘enjoyed the activity (90%)... would continue the activity if it were available (75%)... and (90%) would recommend the activity to friends or relatives.
- Alzheimer’s patients saw a reduction in body stiffness and arthritis as well as alleviation of illness’s symptoms of restlessness and wandering

### Pain relief

- Reflexology work reduces the pain of those with kidney and ureter stones
- Reflexology reduced the pain of 66% toothache patients as well as eliminating the symptoms of 26%
- 19% of headache sufferers stopped taking medication following reflexology work

### Recovery from surgery

- Lithotripsy (external crushing of kidney and ureter stones) patients experienced less pain, began excretion of stones earlier, and completed excretion earlier than those who did not receive reflexology work
- Post-surgical patients who receive foot reflexology and medication report ‘significantly less’ agony than those on painkillers alone
- Reflexology work was found to be more effective and safer than standard treatment of catheterization in patients with uroschesis, retention of urine following surgery
- Those receiving foot Reflexology experienced less pain over time than those who did not following laparoscopic sterilization
- Reflexology and guided relaxation ‘appear to be effective’, non-invasive techniques for promoting psychological wellbeing for patients in the postoperative recovery period following coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery

### Employer benefit

- Reflexology saved on a Danish employer US 3.300 Dollars a month in fewer sick days for employees in addition to improving the work environment



## Influence symptoms

- Not only do constipated individuals evacuate their bowel more quickly when receiving Reflexology work but individuals with normal bowel function do also
- Diabetic individuals provided with foot reflexology and hypoglycaemic agents showed a significant change in measures of disease as opposed to those who received hypoglycaemic agents alone where no significant change was observed
- For individuals diagnosed as diabetic, hypoglycaemic agents work better for those receiving Reflexology work as well as showing 'marked improvement' in measures of the disease
- Symptoms of coronary heart disease (chest distress and angina) disappear in those receiving foot Reflexology work as well as causing a drop in blood pressure of 25/5, results better than those achieved with medication
- Reflexology treatment was found to be as effective as nasal irrigation for alleviation of chronic sinusitis
- The results indicate that Reflexology does offer 'some therapeutic benefit' to multiple sclerosis patients especially in the first 6 weeks of treatment, although the treatment sessions need to be regular, and the benefits seem to diminish after twelve weeks
- Specific Reflexology treatment was of benefit in alleviating motor, sensory and urinary symptoms in multiple sclerosis patients
- Individuals with kidney infection who received foot reflexology and medication recovered more quickly than those who used medicine alone
- When applied to those with migraine headache, it was concluded that the Reflexology treatment was at least as effective as the Flunarizin treatment and may be classified as an alternative nonpharmacological therapeutic treatment that would be particularly appropriate to those patients that were unable to follow pharmacological treatment

## Hospice

- Reflexology modifies the distressing symptoms of pain and nausea in patients hospitalised with cancer. The results revealed that the treatments produced a significant and immediate effect on the patient perceptions of pain, nausea and relaxation. The results were so positive that the researchers recommend that further research using larger numbers of patients in controlled clinical trials into its effectiveness of reflexology in alleviating pain, nausea and anxiety in the management of these symptoms by the family at home is warranted
- 100% of the Reflexology group benefited from an improved in quality of life: appearance, appetite, breathing, communication (doctors), communication (family), communication (nurses), concentration, constipation, diarrhoea, fear of future, isolation, nutrition, mobility, mood, nausea, pain, sleep and tiredness. Within the Reflexology group, the participants reported an improvement in all components of the quality of life scale compared to 67.5 in the placebo group. Nevertheless, this study would suggest that the provision of Reflexology for palliative patients within the general setting could be beneficial. Not only did the patients in the study enjoy the intervention, they were also 'relaxed' comforted and achieved relief from some of their symptoms
- Foot Reflexology alleviated anxiety and pain for patients with breast and lung cancer. This has important implications for nursing practice as Reflexology can be taught easily.

Reflexology is a simple technique for human touch which can be performed anywhere, requires no special equipment, is non-invasive and does not interfere with patient's privacy

- '...hand massage could be effective in decreasing nausea, vomiting state anxiety, pulse rate and blood pressure of acute leukaemia children receiving high dose of chemotherapy

### Reflexology improves quality of life

- Alzheimer's patients saw a reduction in body stiffness and arthritis as well as alleviation of illness's symptoms of restlessness and wandering
- '.. older adults (who followed a program of stepping on a reflexology mat) experienced significant improvements in mental and physical well-being, including reductions in blood pressure and pain levels....considerable improvements in their ability to perform 'activity of daily living', increased psychosocial well-being, and significantly reduced daytime sleepiness and pain. Participants also reported greatly improved perceptions of control over falls and reductions in resting diastolic blood pressure'
- Reflexology offers some therapeutic benefits to MS patients especially in the first 6 weeks of treatment, although the treatment sessions need to be regular, and the benefits seem to diminish after twelve weeks
- Specific Reflexology treatment applied to multiple sclerosis patients was of benefit in alleviating motor, sensory and urinary symptoms
- 100% of the cancer patients receiving reflexology work benefited from an improvement in quality of life: appearance, appetite, breathing, communication (doctors), communication (family), communication (nurses), concentration, constipation, diarrhoea, fear of future, isolation, mobility, mood, nausea, pain, sleep and tiredness
- Hand Reflexology applied to children with acute leukaemia receiving high dose of chemotherapy was effective in decreasing nausea, vomiting, state anxiety, pulse rate and blood pressure.