

Therapeutic touch for healing acute wounds.

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Therapeutic Touch (TT) is an alternative therapy that has gained popularity over the past two decades for helping wounds to heal. Practitioners enter a meditative state and pass their hands above the patient's body to find and correct any imbalances in the patient's 'life energy' or chi. Scientific instruments have been unable to detect this energy. The effect of TT on wound healing has been expounded in anecdotal publications. To identify and review all relevant data to determine the effects of TT on healing acute wounds. For this fourth update, we searched The Cochrane Wounds Group Specialised Register (searched 27 January 2012); The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) (The Cochrane Library 2012, Issue 1); Ovid MEDLINE (2010 to January Week 2 2012); Ovid MEDLINE (In-Process & Other Non-Indexed Citations, January 26, 2012); Ovid EMBASE (2010 to 2012 Week 03); and EBSCO CINAHL (2010 to January 6 2012). All randomised or quasi-randomised controlled trials, which compared the effect of TT with a placebo, another treatment, or no treatment control were considered. Studies which used TT as a stand-alone treatment, or as an adjunct to other therapies, were eligible. One author (DO'M) determined the eligibility for inclusion of all trials in the review. Both authors conducted data extraction and evaluation of trial validity independently. Each trial was assessed using predetermined criteria. No new trials were identified for this update. Four trials in people with experimental wounds were included. The effect of TT on wound healing in these studies was variable. Two trials (n = 44 & 24) demonstrated a significant increase in healing associated with TT, while one trial found significantly worse healing after TT and the other found no significant difference. All trials are at high risk of bias. There is no robust evidence that TT promotes healing of acute wounds.

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