

## The Value of Clinical Reflexology in Complementary Medicine

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What is Clinical Reflexology? Do you know? How does it support treatment regimens for many chronic ailments? These ailments or challenging conditions include asthma, cancer, cardiovascular issues, constipation, diabetes, dementia, fertility, fibromyalgia, incontinence, menopause, migraine/headache, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, periodic pain, premenstrual syndrome, posture stability, pregnancy, rheumatoid arthritis, and stress arising from many work and lifestyle choices. Surprised about the utility of clinical reflexology? Is this a new approach to increasing quality of life for human beings? NO!

Reflexology usage originated in Egypt and China over 5000 years ago. Egyptian pyramids with hieroglyphics confirm its presence and was very prominent as part of medicine beginning with the 2300 BC culture in Egypt. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a similar approach called reflex zone therapy became important and was being used in Europe and Asia. The zone therapy concept divided the body into ten longitudinal zones for both the left (5) and right side (5) of the physical body with each zone passing down through the body with connections to the ears, hands, arms and feet. Modern day reflexology, born in the 1900's, has further divided the body horizontally to include specific contact and pressure points for utility. Not surprising, many of these pressure points are also the basis for acupuncture procedures.

How does Reflexology work? It is a non-intrusive touch therapy with the aim to restore the body's natural balance and promote a feeling of well-being through reflex pressure touching specific areas of the feet, ears, legs and hands. It apparently works to redistribute an invisible energy field or life force that flows through the different channels or zones in the body known as *Qi* (often pronounced as *Chee* in English). Level 5 clinical reflexologists (the highest academy level attained) can manipulate or stimulate, through specific body areas, the flow of energy to the linked body part and restore the balance and energy flow. This effects a deep state of relaxation which allows release of endorphins, hormones and chemicals which help reduce pain and stress which are present in the afflicted body. This knowledge, by the clinical reflexologist, most often using a part of the foot and to which each body organ it is connected allows release of the stress, injury, or illness when the body becomes out of balance and unable to treat or heal itself. Homeostasis, or whole-body state of balance can be achieved. This is similar to the American Indian use of the *Medicine Wheel* and its influence on individuals when being treated for various conditions that require adjustment of body energy (previously published in *eCronicon*) by this *Healthcare Advocate*.

Clinical reflexology is recognized as a powerful alternative therapy complementing traditional medicines by well known clinics and institutes worldwide. Mayo Clinic in the US, National Institutes of Health in the US, the National Cancer Institute, WHO (World Health Organization) and many international centers of excellence including the Essential Feeling Center located at the intersection of Eastern Avenue E and A127 in Gidea Park, Romford, UK RM2 6NX. Clinical reflexology clinics are located worldwide. Often many centers that offer the *Hot Stones Reflexology* technique which dates back to 1500 BC in China, India and ancient Egypt impacts the body at its deepest level. It reduces tension, calms the senses and creates a significant relaxation, tranquility and often induces a meditation state. It has been clinically shown to reduce cortisol levels, known to influence stress, through improvement of blood circulation and lymphatic drainage to the kidneys and the heart. Organs are cleansed and toxins are eliminated from the body improving immunity. Most important is that this type of reflexology has a heightened ability to release tension in connective tissues. Sound unbelievable?

Many international health care practitioners and scientists have published their successful experiences in the different chronic conditions being studied. One of the most advanced reflexology treatments effective in helping people suffering from stress and anxiety performed by Level 5 practitioners is known as NEPIP (NeuroEndoPsychoImmunoPody). This clinical activity involves the study of relationship between the brain, the neurological systems and the direct relationship with the endocrine system through the brain hypothalamus and how it affects brain health and the immune system. All of this assessment can be done through the feet!

What is your experience using Reflexology? This Health Care Advocate™ has personally experienced various successful clinical experiences including both personal need and a lesser investigated client condition of dementia. Very few publications about the use of reflexology for dementia patients currently exists in the literature. The following technique for relieving dementia brain challenges through gentle massaging of the tops of the toes (and the connection to the brain) of this challenged client, was predicted by a reflexology chart (with reference to over 40 specific body parts or organs) which will respond to stimulation.

This technique provided needed relaxation, increased blood flow and apparent toxins release. The result was remarkable improvement in the client/patient dementia condition and mental well-being. Confusion was relieved with daily reflexology treatments...and demonstrates support to extension of quality life for the middle stage dementia or Alzheimer's patient.

Be Well!

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