

## Effect of Distance Reiki on Perceived Stress among Software Professionals in Bangalore

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the efficacy of Distance Reiki on Perceived Stress. 60 software professionals from a software firm situated at Bangalore who met the inclusion exclusion criteria were taken up for the study. Sample was divided into two groups - experimental and control group (30 in each group). The intervention was carried out for 21 days for the experimental group and the control group was not given any intervention. Both groups were assessed at two time intervals- pre and post assessment. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14) and socio demographic checklist was used to assess the participants of both the groups. The obtained data were analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test to assess the significance level between the groups. Results of the study reveal that there is significant reduction in perceived stress from pre to post assessments in the intervention group.

**Keywords:** *Perceived Stress, Distance Reiki, Software Professionals*

Perceived stress at the workplace has gained a lot of importance in recent years. It is often described as the outcome variable measuring the experienced level of stress as a function of objective stressful events, coping processes and personality factors (Augustine et al, 2011). **Stress at the workplace** is of great interest to psychologists, as most people spend a third of their adult lives at work (<http://www.apa.org/topics/workplace/>). Research has shown a huge spectrum of potential sources of stress at the workplace. These sources of stress are environmental factors like economic problems, political turmoil, technological upheaval etc., organizational factors like job role and task demands, interpersonal demands, organisational hierarchy, scalar chain, organization's growth stage etc. and individual factors like family issues, financial problems, personality traits etc. (Robbins,2001).Despite the different array of stressors employees are faced with, helping them combat stress is a tedious job from the organisational point of view. Over time various stress management programs have been tried and tested and the

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effects are seldom long lasting as the programs may not cater to the specific requirements of the employees as the workforce is always heterogeneous in India. In recent times there has been a huge shift of the type of stress management programs being used in software companies. Owing credit to massive research being done on the efficacy of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), incorporation of CAM has paved its way into successful stress management techniques. Ranging from meditation to Ayurveda software companies are using a wide spectrum of CAM for its workforce. Reiki is also a CAM, it is a traditional Japanese healing modality categorized as energy medicine or bio field therapy by the National Centre for Complementary and Alternative medicine (NCCAM). Reiki practitioners help their patients to heal by placing their hands slightly above or lightly touching the patient's body at specific points. By doing this the Reiki practitioner is channeling life force energy through his/her body into the body of the patient. This allows the body's natural healing energy to flow freely thereby facilitating healing (Barnett et al,2014). Reiki can also be passed as Distance Reiki where in the patient and the Reiki practitioner is not in each other's vicinity. The Reiki practitioner mentally visualises the patient and heals the latter. Distance Reiki is usually used when the patient is unable to meet the Reiki practitioner Reiki has most often been used for memory loss, anxiety, depression, pain management and also in growing frequency with terminally ill patients suffering from cancer and AIDS. Although research involving Reiki as an energy healing therapy has not been extensive, the present study is being conducted to test whether Distance Reiki can reduce Perceived Stress of Software professionals.

### *Objective of the study*

- To study the efficacy of Distance Reiki in reducing perceived stress among software engineers.

### *Hypothesis of the study*

- Distance Reiki has no significant effect in reducing perceived stress of software engineers.

### *Research Design*

Experimental design was adopted in this study.

## **METHOD**

### *Participants / Sampling*

The data for the study was collected in Bangalore from IT companies for software professionals with complaints of high stress. The sample of engineers was taken from Bangalore only based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The sample size was sixty, thirty participants each was randomly assigned to the experimental group the control group.

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### *Inclusion Criteria*

- Male and Female engineers.
- Age 23 to 33 years.
- Ability to comprehend and write in English.
- Minimum of 12 months' work experience in an organisation.
- Minimum educational qualification- Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Technology/BCA/ BSC Computer science
- Employed in the IT industry.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

- Presence of any chronic physical ailment or psychiatric disorder.
- Previous exposure to any behavioural intervention within the past 12 months.

### *Materials/Tools of the study*

1. Socio-demographic Data Sheet: This form contained information such as name, age, sex, education, marital status and family type, nature of work and years of experience and any significant physical illness.
2. Stress inventory for gathering background information about stressors faced by software professionals.(Verma, M;2001)
3. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, et al., 1983): Developed by Cohen, et al., (1983), is a global scale and identifies the factors influencing or influenced by stress appraisal. It is a 14 -item scale which measures the degree to which situations in one's life is appraised as stressful during the past month. There are seven negative and seven positive questions for which the subjects were required to choose from a scale of 5 alternatives 'never' 'almost never' 'sometimes' 'fairly often' 'very often' relating to their feeling of being stressed on a 0-4 scale. The 7 positive items were reverse scored and added up to the 7 negative items to get the total score. Higher scores indicate greater stress. PSS scores are obtained by reversing the scores on the 7 positive items (e.g. 0=4, 1=3, 2=2) and then summing across all 14 items. Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 13 are the positively stated items. Co-efficient alpha reliability for PSS is 0.84 with a test retest correlation of 0.85.

### *Statistical tools*

Individual variables were coded for computer analysis and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The obtained data was analysed using descriptive statistics (Mean, SD, and percentage) and paired t-test to assess statistically significant difference within the group and between the group before and after assessment.

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### *Procedure*

The investigator sent an e-mail to the experimental group, which consisted of a write up explaining the nature and purpose of the study. A detailed explanation about Reiki and Distance Reiki was given in the mail. The mail was concluded with an invitation to participate in the study with a link to an online pre-assessment of the pre-assessment tools via Google docs. The participants from group who completed the online pre-assessment were healed through distance reiki for 21 days. The intervention of distance reiki was conducted by the investigator who is a certified Reiki practitioner, at her residence. Distance reiki would be sent to all participants at a fixed time slot of 5 minutes between 3am to 5 am for 21 days continuously. After 21 days an online post assessment was done via mail for all the participants. The Control Group was not given any intervention however orientation to the study and their importance as a control group was communicated to those who provided their consent to be a part of the control group. Both the tools were administered on the group. The group was again assessed after 21 days (post assessment).

### **RESULTS**

Background information: The age range for the experimental group was 24 to 33. This group had 24 male participants and 6 female participants. As far as education background is concerned 60% were undergraduates and the remaining were postgraduates in software technology. This group had equal number of married and unmarried participants. Majority hailed from nuclear families only 33% belonged to non-nuclear families.

The control group had participants ranging from the age of 23 to 31. 76% of this group were males and the remaining were females. Majority of the participants were undergraduates the rest were post graduates in software technology. Only 2 % of the participants were married, 98% were single. Majority hailed from nuclear families only 30% were from non-nuclear families.

The sample reported to suffer highest from stressors pertaining to their work. The major sources of stress were poor relations with superiors, lack of support from superiors, difficulty in maintaining relationship with superiors, unfair assessments by superiors, discrimination and favouritism, working with uncooperative colleagues, working with incompetent colleagues, jealousies and competition among colleagues, time pressure and deadlines, work overload, fear of making mistakes that can lead to serious consequences, work is mentally straining, having to work continuously to achieve self-set targets, feeling inadequate for the job, task monotony, feeling of being underpaid, lack of promotion aspects, feeling insecure in the job and fear of becoming redundant.

Both the groups had similar views and beliefs about CAM. The sample was aware about the benefits of various CAM modalities. On the contrary the sample did not have bare minimum knowledge of Reiki and its healing potential.

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The results have been obtained after the collected data was scored and put to statistical analysis in order to test the formulated hypothesis of the study.

Table No.1 indicates the t-test results showing the effect of Distance Reiki on Perceived Stress

Groups Compared	N	M	S.D	t	Significance
Experimental and Control Groups before intervention					
E.G	30	26.27	5.76	1.96	0.539
C.G	30	28.23	7.15		
Experimental group					
Before	30	26.27	5.76	2.074	0.047
After	30	22.97	7.19		
Control group					
Before	30	28.23	7.15	1.84	0.076
After	30	26.47	5.51		
Experimental and Control Groups after intervention					
E.G	30	22.97	7.2	3.5	0.116
C.G	30	26.47	5.51		

Table 1 show that the Experimental group has obtained a mean of 26.27 and S.D of 5.76 before intervention and mean of 22.97 and S.D of 7.2 after intervention. The Control group has obtained a mean of 28.23 and S.D of 7.15 before intervention and mean of 26.47 and S.D of 5.51 after intervention. The obtained t-value 1.96 comparing the mean values of the experimental and control group before intervention is not significant at 0.05 level.

While comparing the mean value of the Experimental Group, before and after intervention, a t-value of 2.07 was obtained, which is significant at 0.05 level. Comparison between the mean values of the Control Group, before and after intervention gives 1.84 as the t-value, which is not significant at 0.05 level. The obtained t-value 3.5, comparing the mean values of Experimental group and control group after intervention is significant at 0.01 levels. Since the experimental group has consistently scored a significant lower mean than the control group, the alternate hypothesis "Distance Reiki has a significant effect on Perceived stress among software professionals is accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to check the efficacy of Distance Reiki on perceived stress of software professionals. Before the intervention both groups had similar scores on perceived stress. Special notification was given to participants asking them to refrain from initiating any stress combating technique during the 21 day intervention period. This was done to ensure that there would be not extraneous variable which would interfere with the study thereby maintaining likelihood that significant differences could exist post treatment which could be attributed to the distance reiki intervention.

On completion of the 21 day distance reiki intervention period, paired t tests demonstrated significant group differences on perceived stress. These findings are in consensus with the study of Shore AG (2004) who explored the long term effects of energetic healing on symptoms of psychological healing and self-perceived stress. In this study participants were healed by hands on reiki, distance reiki and placebo reiki separately. Results showed that Distance Reiki too had a significant effect on reducing stress in comparison with the control group.

The present findings is further supported by the study of Crawford et al (2002) which revealed that distance healing intervention studies scored better than hands on healing studies. However, the current finding conflicts as the systematic review by AstinJa et al (2000) of available data on the efficacy of any form of distance healing. It was noted that it was difficult to draw a conclusion about the efficacy of distance healing, however more than 57% of trials showed a positive treatment effect.

With the usual fast paced life of software professionals Distance Reiki has a higher preference than hands on reiki due to various convenience factors like, the recipient does not need to go to the reiki practitioner's reiki studio or clinic to receive Reiki, as time and space is no constraint for distance reiki the recipient can receive reiki healing at any time during the day at any place in the world also there are no rigid dietary restrictions to be followed to receive reiki unlike other CAM modalities like yoga and Ayurveda. These convenience factors can be considered as contributing reasons for the effectiveness of distance Reiki in this study.

Furthermore while traditional psychotherapy and medication is commonly used to combat symptoms of stress, these are more expensive in comparison to Distance Reiki healing. However this study is not aiming to compare Reiki with conventional psychological treatments. Recent research on various other energy healing modalities has shown similar results were in stress has significantly reduced. Studies on the efficacy of Distance Reiki are sparse, hence the new findings of this study contributes to the field of CAM interventions on psychological illness.

## CONCLUSIONS

Stress is usually treated with psychiatric counselling and medication. Previous studies have found that Reiki is a promising complementary and alternative medicine for combating stress. The current study reveals that Distance Reiki reduces perceived stress as compared with controls. The benefit of Distance Reiki is proven to be effective with five minutes healing daily over a brief period of twenty one days for software professionals. The results of this study demonstrate that Distance Reiki can be used as an effective treatment to handle stress.

### *Acknowledgments*

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### *Conflict of Interests*

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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**How to cite this article:** S Vasudev, S Shastri (2016), Effect of Distance Reiki on Perceived Stress among Software Professionals in Bangalore, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 3, Issue 4, No. 58, ISSN 2348-5396 (e), ISSN: 2349-3429 (p), DIP: 18.01.055/20160304, ISBN: 978-1-365-24976-1