

## A randomized double-blind study of the effect of distant healing in a population with advanced AIDS. Report of a small scale study.

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### Abstract

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Various forms of distant healing (DH), including prayer and "psychic healing," are widely practiced, but insufficient formal research has been done to indicate whether such efforts actually affect health. We report on a double-blind randomized trial of DH in 40 patients with advanced AIDS. Subjects were pair-matched for age, CD4+ count, and number of AIDS-defining illnesses and randomly selected to either 10 weeks of DH treatment or a control group. DH treatment was performed by self-identified healers representing many different healing and spiritual traditions. Healers were located throughout the United States during the study, and subjects and healers never met. Subjects were assessed by psychometric testing and blood draw at enrollment and followed for 6 months. At 6 months, a blind medical chart review found that treatment subjects acquired significantly fewer new AIDS-defining illnesses (0.1 versus 0.6 per patient,  $P = 0.04$ ), had lower illness severity (severity score 0.8 versus 2.65,  $P = 0.03$ ), and required significantly fewer doctor visits (9.2 versus 13.0,  $P = 0.01$ ), fewer hospitalizations (0.15 versus 0.6,  $P = 0.04$ ), and fewer days of hospitalization (0.5 versus 3.4,  $P = 0.04$ ). Treated subjects also showed significantly improved mood compared with controls (Profile of Mood States score -26 versus 14,  $P = 0.02$ ). There were no significant differences in CD4+ counts. These data support the possibility of a DH effect in AIDS and suggest the value of further research.

### Full text

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