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A Research Study: Jin Shin Jyutsu & Perceived Stress

by Donna Lamke

Two years ago, as part of a master's thesis in nursing, I conducted a research study on the effects of Jin Shin Jyutsu on perceived stress. I chose to research this topic because after several years of practicing Jin Shin Jyutsu on myself and my clients, it was clear that treatments helped people feel relaxed, which to me is the opposite of feeling "stressed." I wanted to investigate in a systematic way what effects, if any, Jin Shin Jyutsu had on the perceptions of stress, which have shown that reducing stress benefits one's overall health, from immune system function to mental attitude. I thought that this research project may provide some measurable data to support the value of Jin Shin Jyutsu as a stress reducing, and thereby health-improving practice.

Hmmmm...how to measure stress?

After searching the literature, I found the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), developed by Dr. Sheldon Cohen. This scale measures how stressed a person feels. No physical measurements, such as blood pressure, etc., were involved. My research questionnaire included the PSS and 7 questions focusing on common

stress related symptoms, such as sleep problems, headaches, etc. 34 nurses from local hospitals participated in the study. Each received 6 Jin Shin Jyutsu treatments from either Rose Murray or myself over a 6 to 8 week period. All participants completed the research questions before and after their series of six treatments. Each participant's "before" score was compared with his/her "after" score to determine if the treatments had changed how stressed people felt, or their stress-related symptoms. Half of the group also served as a "control" group by completing the questionnaire twice before receiving any treatments.

No significant changes were observed in control group scores. Statistically significant changes were observed in perceived stress after the 6 treatments; scores dropped from a median of 17.0 before treatments to 13.5 after treatments. Physical stress symptom scores also decreased significantly after treatments.

After the treatment series, participants completed another brief questionnaire which asked them to describe in their own words how the treatments affected them physically and mentally/emotionally. This part of the research was the most fun for me, and the responses were truly rich, and very positive. I will include some samples of individual responses below.

62% of participants reported feeling relaxed after treatments. Another

common response (42%) related to improved coping and/or decreased feelings of stress. For Example: "I felt I could handle almost anything. I found the little things in life didn't bother me anymore. I put more energy into enjoying my friends, family, etc." 38% of participants described feeling more at peace or integrated after treatments. For Example: "An increased sense of wholeness and being more in tune with myself." 37% reported a decrease in pain and muscle tension. For Example: "I experienced a balancing of energy, which has involved a pain release from my right shoulder and low back."

Other responses people mentioned include: better sleep, decreased headaches, improved mental clarity, improved energy level emotional release, decreased medication use and a sense of well-being. One participant reported that her toes had "straightened out" to the point that she had to buy larger shoes!

My purpose in doing this research was to begin to document the effects of Jin Shin Jyutsu in a systematic way according to methods accepted in the scientific community. This study, though small, did demonstrate statistically significant positive responses to Jin Shin Jyutsu. I welcome anyone's use of these findings, with the hope of integrating Jin Shin Jyutsu into mainstream healthcare.

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