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Format: Abstract

Reexamining the effect of emotional freedom techniques on stress biochemistry: A randomized controlled trial.

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Author information

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: In a direct replication of Church, Yount, and Brooks (2012), this study examined changes in stress biochemistry and psychological distress symptoms in 53 participants randomly allocated to one of three 60-min group interventions: Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), psychoeducation (PE), and no treatment (NT). The Symptom Assessment-45 (SA-45) was used to assess psychological distress symptoms.

METHOD: Salivary cortisol assays were administered 30 min pre- and postintervention to test cortisol levels. The original study by Church et al. indicated the EFT group showed statistically significant improvements in anxiety (-58.34%, $p < .05$), depression (-49.33%, $p < .002$), overall severity of symptoms (-50.5%, $p < .001$), and symptom breadth (-41.93%, $p < .001$). The group also experienced a significant decrease in cortisol (-24.39%) compared to the PE group (-14.25%) and NT group (-14.44%).

RESULTS: The present results indicated the EFT group experienced a significant decrease in cortisol greater than the original study (-43.24%, $p < .05$), but these results were not mirrored by subjective reports of psychological distress. The EFT group reduction in cortisol was significantly different from that of the PE group (-19.67%), and as expected, the posttreatment cortisol level detected among the EFT group was lower than that of the NT group (2.02%); however, there was not a statistically significant difference between the 2