



The Human Energy Field, a review by Nicole Fortunaso

ACRONYMS

HEF: Human Energy Field
HT: Healing Touch
TT: Therapeutic Touch

The Human Energy Field (HEF) is a concept with many names, one described by Brennan in *Light Emerging* as “life energy associated with human beings” or also more commonly known as the aura. Further Shields et al. did a conceptual analysis of 81 articles (using: Chinn and Kramer's method of creating conceptual meaning) to create or arrive at the following definition: “The HEF is a luminous field of energy that comprises a person, extends beyond the physical body, and is in a continuous mutual process with the environmental energy field. It is a vital energy that is a continuous whole and is recognized by its unique pattern; it is dynamic, creative, nonlinear, unpredictable, and flows in lower and higher frequencies. The balanced HEF is characterized by flow, rhythm, symmetry, and gentle vibration.”

Brennan's theory postulates that the HEF exists within the realm of Universal Energy, and specifically this creates the physical world, essentially the HEF supports the physical realm. As such, manipulation of the HEF can be correlated to healthier outcomes in some studies (see below). Similar views are also shared by Krieger, Kunz and Mentgen, the founders of Healing Touch (HT) and Therapeutic Touch® (TT).

Therapeutic Touch (TT) or Healing Touch (HT) are widely used nursing practices. Therapeutic Touch® is defined by its founder Krieger as “a holistic, evidence-based therapy that incorporates the intentional and compassionate use of universal energy to promote balance and well-being in all aspects of the individual: body, mind, and spirit”. (<http://therapeutictouch.org/>). Where O'Mathuna and Ashford define “Therapeutic Touch® (TT) is an alternative therapy that has gained popularity over the past two decades for helping wounds to heal. Practitioners enter a meditative state and pass their hands above the patient's body to find and correct any imbalances in the patient's 'life energy' or chi. Scientific instruments have been unable to detect this energy. The effect of TT on wound healing has been expounded in anecdotal publications”. Further, practitioners of TT claim to treat many medical conditions by using their hands to manipulate a “human energy field” perceptible above the patient's skin (Rosa et al).

Detecting the HEF

According to Brennan, to date only the bio energy fields have been measured. For example, a magnetic field detector shows our energy field as pulsating between 7.8 to 8Hz per second. More specifically, Brennan summarizes the HEF is only known through personal and clinical observations. This short paper explores an overview of the historic understanding of the HEF and then focuses on documented cases of personal and clinical observations of the HEF via the modalities of HT and TT.

A Brief History of References of the HEF Concept

For centuries humans have been trying to understand the HEF and have been using different terms to explain personal and observed interaction with our energy fields (See Table one). Some of these terms describe and may reference religious cogitations and belief systems. Describing the HEF in different terms highlights human curiosity to explore this topic and understand if it can be harnessed to improve our well being.



Table one: A list of historic terms to describe the HEF or the aura.

Source: Brennan, *Light Emerging*; p.16-17 and Radin, *Real Magic*; p.58

Time	Place/person	Name of Energy
5000 B.C.	India	Prana
3000 B.C.	China	Ch'i or qi
500 B.C.	Greece: Pythagoras	Pneuma or vital energy
1500's	Europe: Paracelsus	Illiastr or cosmic fluid
1600's	Leinnitz	Monads
1700's	Mesmer	Magnetic Fluid
1800's	Reichenbach	Odic Force
1900's	Kilner	Aura
1930-1950	Reich	Orgone

Specifically, Brennan and colleagues observed the HEF as a correlated clinical energy field, with observations on emotional response and low-light level darkroom measurements correlated to human presence and laser bending with HEF. (Brennan, *Light Emerging*: 1993) While these are older studies I was unable to find newer studies on the HEF.

Exploring the HEF

In relation to this topic on the HEF this paper will explore relevant TT studies that focus on demonstrating the existence of the HEF and the effect of perceived vitality of patients.

The first part of this exploration is to demonstrate its existence. There are two studies that contradict whether the HEF can even be perceived by a person or not.

A study of 21 practitioners by Rosa et al. found "practitioners of TT identified the correct hand in only 123 (44%) of 280 trials, which is close to what would be expected for random chance. There was no significant correlation between the practitioner's score and length of experience ($r=0.23$). The statistical power of this experiment was sufficient to conclude that if TT practitioners could reliably detect a human energy field, the study would have demonstrated this." However, a small study by Frances suggested that 11 children aged 3-9 were able to feel the human energy field with purpose or intent to help.

Another topic when exploring the HEF and HT is the effect of the placebo on patients – the mere presence of a person in a support role aids in the healing process (Matourypour et al). For example, there are studies that show that while HT is effective, the placebo effect may play a role in the results.

For example, Matourypour et al. study showed that TT was effective in reducing vomiting in the intervention group of breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. However, the patients experienced lower-intensity vomiting which may be because of presence of a therapist and probably the reduced anxiety related to an additional intervention – the placebo effect.

While, in a study on Massage Therapy and Healing therapy (or TT) according to Post-White et al. are more effective than presence alone or standard care in reducing pain, mood disturbance, and fatigue in patients receiving cancer. And in another study, Decker found that while the placebo effect seemed to play an important part in the results they still concluded that HT is a feasible intervention for the elderly with pain.



In conclusion, there needs to be more studies done on the HEF and therapies associated with manipulating the HEF. Further, there needs to be different tools created to either measure results from a study or to scientifically measure and record the HEF, and finally, how human intervention with HEF assists patients with their health and wellbeing. What ultimately matters for the HEF is that the results be consistent for the same set of conditions, which will create the opportunity for more exploration into this topic.

Resources

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