

Laying On Of Hands

By Nurse Stops Pain

By Karen Peterson



Hospitals Introducing A Therapy Resembling 'Laying On Of Hands'

By Ronald Sullivan

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The transfer of energy from one to another through hands is a very natural potential, according to Dr. Dolores Krieger of New York University. "The laying on of hands"--it's a phrase which conjures up chanting healers, hysterical patients, prayerful fanatics...and charlatanism.

Many people throw "healers" into the same bag as fortune-tellers, witch doctors, and sideshow bearded ladies." But when "the laying on of hands" is discussed by Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., it makes some sort of hard-nosed sense. Her belief in the technique has so impressed the country's largest training school for nurses that she is developing a possible spring course for its graduate students.

Fifty-year old Krieger, who has a doctorate in nursing, is an associate professor of education at New York University. And she's now touring schools of nursing around the country, conducting workshops in a practice she describes as "completely natural, beyond 'faith' --- and having nothing to do with abracadabra."

At a recent conference at the University of Virginia, she helped a woman with a respiratory infection stop coughing for the first time in three weeks. And after she applied the technique to a woman with neck trouble, the conferee claimed she was able to move her head easily for the first time since surgery.

A colleague at NYU says, "Dr. Krieger passed her hands over a strained ligament. My pain subsided for about an hour." That limiting expression "about an hour" is important. Krieger says she does not deal in "cures," but in some brief relief from pain. And rather than running some kind of road show as a miracle worker, she says, "My interest, my research is in scientifically investigating the phenomenon itself. I want to know what physical changes take place."

When Krieger passes her hands over a patient, she says she talks casually, normally. "There are no candles, no incense, nothing dramatic." She adds that the skepticism of some subjects doesn't matter; a cynic can be treated.

Describing her method, she says she feels a tingling in her hands, a sense of warmth deep in her own tissues, which the patient also often feels. "Sometimes my hands are drawn to the problems as if to a magnet." The session might work or not work, might require several visits, or just one.



But she knows the people she treats are getting their money's worth at the minimum--she doesn't charge anything because she says her interest is scientific.

Krieger says she's dealing with an Eastern concept called "prana," meaning vitality or vigor. The healer's vitality or prana can be activated by will and transferred to another person lacking prana. She calls this transfer of energy a very natural human potential. It can be developed by any person with a very strong motivation to help others and who also has a fairly healthy body--in itself an indication of an overflow of prana.

To Krieger, this is anything but mumbo jumbo. It's a phenomenon she has herself helped to examine in the laboratory. She became curious about the powers in certain person's hands when she watched them perform healing acts she couldn't explain medically. "That led me to my own experiments with hemoglobin, found in red blood cells, which carries oxygen to the tissues.

It is also deeply involved with enzyme activities, a link to Sister Smith's work. And the structure of the hemoglobin molecule is similar to that of chlorophyll, which was increased in the Estebany barley seed experiments.

In 1971, Krieger, started three years of testing people with a variety of illnesses, and found that their hemoglobin values rose after the laying on of hands, while the control groups remained almost unchanged. She has gotten the same results in three series of experiments, even after perfecting her tests to control such variables in her subjects as yoga, smoking, exercise, and the effects of transcendental meditation. Again, she does not claim these patients are "cured," only that their hemoglobin counts went up.

Along the way, she learned the healing technique herself from a friend and healer. She claims the art can be taught in an afternoon, but understanding just what is happening can take years.

Continuing her quest, she is now training a group of 75 volunteer nurses. She says she received a letter from one of them recently, beginning, "What do you know. It really works!" Krieger comments. "This nurse is the daughter of a doctor.

She had a neuroganglion cyst which has disappeared since the laying on of hands. Her father confirms this." She reviewed the meager amount of the work by Westerners in the field, and then assisted a healer visiting the United States, Hungarian Oskar Estebany.

Working with a biochemist in Canada in the '60s, Estebany had already conducted two startling experiments in labs, with unaffected "control" groups.

By holding wounded mice in his hands, he had accelerated their healing processes.

And barley seeds raised with water he had also held grew faster, taller, and contained more chlorophyll and their control groups.

Krieger then digested the work of a biochemist-nun now with a cancer research center in Buffalo, New York. That scientist, Sister Justa Smith, worked with healers able to change the bonding properties of enzymes, making "sick" enzymes "well" again, by meditating over them or touching them. There wasn't much Western data to explain all this, but she found much more in the literature of the East, with its emphasis on prana. She says she learned that prana is linked to what we could call an oxygen molecule.

Krieger stresses scientific parlance probably to lend credibility to a controversial technique she claims is usually confused in the public mind with religion. "I identify four kinds of healers," she says. "The deeply emotional 'faith healer' such as Kathryn Kuhlman.

The 'spiritual healer' or medium, such as the ones so popular in England. The 'psychic healer' or 'hunchy healer' as I call them, who know they're doing SOMETHING, but aren't sure what. And the 'paranormal healers' who seek actual knowledge about the subtle energies around us which can be used to help us relate to one another in different ways. I am this type." Right now, she's pondering why prana should be transferred through the hands, not some other part of the body. "Why shouldn't we have a KISS of health, instead of death, for example? I am beginning to think that the lessons of acupuncture can explain it.

There is a confluence of three meridians, along which energy flows, in the hands. The literature of the East has a great deal to tempt us with."





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An unorthodox therapy in which nurses attempt to make sick patients feel better by "laying hands" on them is being introduced in hospitals and nursing schools throughout the country.

In many ways similar to the laying-on of hands that is practiced by faith healers and mystics and that is scoffed at by medical science. The therapy is being taught at the graduate level by Dr. Dolores Krieger, a nurse and a professor at the New York University School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions.

Unlike some of the more colorful faith healers of the past, Dr. Krieger does not claim miraculous cures or divine interventions. Mostly, she says, she has helped the sick by showing them and in the process giving them the energy they need to deal with their illnesses more effectively.

Dr. Krieger's therapy, which she calls "therapeutic touch," seeks to create a feeling of caring that physical closeness or touching, like stroking a fevered brow or holding someone's hand, can convey.

Actually, she rarely touches a patient. Dr. Krieger keeps her hands about an inch away from a patient's body, she said, "because we're dealing with energy fields that surround the body, and touching isn't necessary."

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Energy Transmission Reported Medical authorities agree that compassion and caring expressed through therapies such as Dr. Krieger's can have a salutary effect and that anything that makes a patient feel better can also help him recover more quickly. However, Dr. Krieger contends that she can do more than that. She says that "therapeutic touch" is capable in many instances of transmitting what she calls bodily energy from a healthy nurse to a sick patient whose illness has placed him in an energy "deficit".

Medical authorities are skeptical. While recognizing the value of caring that is implicit in Dr. Krieger's therapy, they disputed her contention that it could induce biological or chemical change.

Dr. Daniel X. Friedman, the chairman of the psychiatry department at the University of Chicago Medical School and a spokesman in this case for the American Medical Association, said medicine "traditionally has rejected anything that cannot be explained scientifically or rationally."

The 54 year old Dr. Krieger, a longtime student of Eastern philosophy and transcendental thought, said she became interested in the laying-on of hands about 10 years ago when she was introduced to the work of Oskar Estebany and Dora Kunz, two prominent healers. Instructed More Than 3,000 They convinced her, she said, that what they did could be done in hospitals.

Dr. Krieger said she had anticipated considerable opposition from the medical community. "I was ready for rejection but I got support instead," she said in an interview in her small office on the NYU campus, just off Washington Square.

During the five years she has taught "therapeutic touch," Dr. Krieger estimated, she has instructed more than 3,000 nurses, physicians, therapists and even two veterinarians. Last month, she held a seminar on her therapy at Calgary General Hospital in Canada, where the nursing staff is considering introducing her therapy as a pilot project.

Earlier this year, she took part in seminars and workshops at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health and in other programs for nurses at the University of Alaska. In her workshops she demonstrates her technique, using either a patient or a volunteer.

What she does, she said, is to try to sense through her hands places of tension that emanate from a patient's body. Then, she said, she tries to remove them, much like a sweeper brushing away surface debris.



Laura Silva Krieger