

1. How reliable is the source of the claim?

The source of the claim that therapeutic touch does in fact work is the patients themselves, who have experienced reduced pain and the practitioners who have carried out the treatment. There is no scientific way to tell that the pain is being reduced, so the basis of whether or not it works relies on patient feedback. Evidently those patients who are successful with the treatment are more likely to be interviewed for a video.

2. Does this source often make similar claims?

The source, being the patients and the practitioners, are followers of their own practice. So, yes, they do make similar claims often, creating a following.

3. Have the claims been verified by another source?

There is no clinical way to verify the practice other than a patient's verbal results. Perhaps the mere idea that the practice works creates a sort of placebo effect in the patient that makes him/her feel better.

4. How does the claim fit with what we know about how the world works?

The claim that touch can cure does not really fit with science. If touch did work there would be a lot less people taking medicines. The practice seems like pseudoscience because of the experiment that proved that the practitioners are uncertain about where "energy" is, and also because the results cannot be clinically tested so the verbal results may be biases from devout followers of the practice.

5. Has anyone gone out of the way to disprove the claim, or has only supportive evidence been sought?

A very young scientist carried out an experiment that damaged the credibility of therapeutic touch. The scientist put a cardboard box over the hands of the therapeutic touch practitioner so that he/she could not see what was happening in the box. The scientist then put her hand over either the right or left hand of the practitioner and asked the practitioner to guess which hand she was hovering over based on her "energy." Therapeutic touch is based on finding the "energy" within the patient, however most of the practitioners could not guess where the "energy" was.

6. Does the preponderance of evidence point to the claimant's conclusion or a different one?

This evidence proves that there is really no way to "feel energy"—without looking at least. And since this energy is the basis of therapeutic touch, it discounts the practice's abilities.

7. Is the claimant employing the accepted rules of reason and tools of research, or have

these been abandoned in favor of others that lead to the desired conclusion?

The claimant, being the young scientist, conducted an appropriate experiment with a sample of different practitioners to get an idea of the practice as a whole. With no pre-determined bias towards one conclusion or another, the young scientist was able to get fair results.

Thus, therapeutic touch is a "pseudoscience" by Shermer's measure.