

# Energy Psychology 2025 Research Update

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## Introduction

Over the past two decades, research on energy psychology (EP) interventions has grown steadily, with an increasing number of clinical trials, and synthesis of information by systematic reviews and meta-analyses published across a wide range of countries and clinical contexts. In a 2022 review (Freedom, Hux, Warner), we highlighted the substantial body of international EP research – much of it accessible primarily through Google Scholar – that was largely outside traditional Western indexing systems. Since that time, the pace and scope of EP research have continued to expand. The present paper is a focused update on EP research published in 2025, bringing together newly published clinical trials and review-level evidence to characterize current trends, emerging areas of application, and the evolving contexts in which EP interventions are being studied.

## Highlights

- In 2025, energy psychology research expanded substantially in volume, geographic reach, and clinical indications.
- A structured Google Scholar search for 2025 identified 37 new clinical trials and 15 new review publications relevant to energy psychology.
- Across clinical trials and reviews, findings consistently supported the effectiveness of EP interventions for anxiety, depression, stress, and related outcomes, with evidence of durability where follow-up was reported.
- Seven new clinical trials conducted in Western health care system and research contexts (primarily Australia and the United States) extended the evidence base for Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) into new populations (e.g. coping with cancer and covid-related conditions) with outcomes including clinically favorable changes in self-reported quality of life, resilience, forgiveness, and well-being.
- Thirty clinical trials in non-Western contexts were also identified. In these studies, populations were typically defined by medical conditions while treatment targets were predominantly psychological or symptom-level outcomes such as relief from pain, anxiety, depression, stress, sleep disturbance, or fatigue.
- The ratio of Western (7) to non-Western (30) studies represents an emerging trend in which clinical and scientific interest in the approach is extending to a

growing number of countries and cultures. The majority of non-Western clinical trials were conducted in medical or health-care settings.

- Reviews published in 2025 included two meta-analyses demonstrating effectiveness of EFT for PTSD, and for cancer-related anxiety, depression and anticipatory grief. Two network meta-analyses evaluating EFT alongside other psychological interventions signaled increasing integration into mainstream comparative frameworks.
- Eight additional systematic literature reviews addressed a wide range of populations and conditions, including both EFT and a variation termed “Spiritual EFT” (SEFT), suggesting that a broader range of clinical applications now have sufficient evidence to support synthesis.
- Energy psychology in cancer care continued to accumulate supporting evidence, with multiple new clinical trials, systematic reviews, and a meta-analysis published in 2025 alone.
- Google Scholar was used in the majority of systematic reviews that reported database sources, underscoring its importance for identifying the global energy psychology research literature, particularly studies published outside Western literature indexing systems.

## **How the 2025 Literature was Identified**

Energy psychology research published in 2025 was identified through two complementary sources. First, key papers were identified through monitoring the literature and engagement with the international research and clinical community by the Chair of the ACEP Research Committee (second author of this report). Then, a structured search of Google Scholar was conducted to ensure a broader scope of the 2025 publications was assessed.

Searches for clinical trials and reviews were restricted to papers published in 2025 and used combinations of terms related to clinical trials, energy psychology and modalities.

Search results were screened in stages. Titles and abstracts or short descriptions were reviewed to identify clinical trials and reviews potentially related to EP interventions. Then based on full abstracts or full texts where available, final eligibility was determined, including a check for the paper on the journal site. Papers were then coded to characterize study type, EP modality, comparator, treatment setting, clinical indications, key outcomes, results, and for clinical trials, the country in which the study was conducted.

This process was intended to ground expert-identified papers within a broader view of the 2025 literature but is not a full systematic review.

Details of search terms, screening steps, and coding framework, as well as tables of the paper characteristics and full references, can be found in the [supplementary materials](#).

## **Clinical Trials Published in 2025: Scope and Patterns**

Thirty-seven clinical trials of energy psychology interventions were published in 2025, spanning a wide range of countries, treatment settings, populations, and clinical targets. Together, these studies demonstrate both continuity with earlier EP research and notable expansion in clinical contexts and applications.

A list of the trials and summary tables describing their characteristics by Western and non-Western research context are provided in the [supplementary materials](#).

### **Clinical trials in Western research contexts**

Seven trials were conducted in Western health care and research settings, most frequently in Australia and the United States. All Western trials published in 2025 evaluated Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and the majority used randomized or comparative designs.

These studies extended the evidence base for EFT into new populations and conditions. In addition to reducing anxiety, depression, and stress, outcomes included statistically significant improvements in chronic pain, fear of cancer recurrence, caregiver burden in COVID-related contexts, forgiveness related to perceived interpersonal transgressions, and broader quality of life measures such as life satisfaction, well-being and self-regulation.

### **Clinical trials in non-Western countries**

Thirty trials (81%) were conducted in non-Western countries, most frequently in Indonesia, Turkey, and China, with additional studies from Japan, India, Egypt, and El Salvador. In contrast to Western studies, these trials were predominantly conducted in medical or health care settings.

Study populations in non-Western contexts were most often defined by medical conditions, including women's health concerns, cancer, chronic illness (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, COPD), surgical recovery, and COVID-related challenges. Despite this medical framing of populations, treatment targets were largely psychological or symptom-level outcomes, usually pain, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, or fatigue.

### **Energy Psychology modalities and comparators**

EFT remained the most frequently studied EP modality overall. In non-Western countries, Spiritual EFT (SEFT) was also prominent, particularly in Muslim majority areas. In addition, single trials of Thought Field Therapy (TFT) and Advanced

Integrative Therapy (AIT) contributed to a growing evidence base for EP modalities beyond EFT.

Across settings, most trials used active or comparative designs, with comparators including waitlist or usual care as well as other complementary or mind-body interventions.

### **General outcome patterns**

Across both Western and non-Western contexts, EP interventions were associated with consistent symptom reduction across targeted outcomes. Where follow-up assessments were reported, treatment gains were generally maintained over time.

These trials span diverse settings, populations, and conditions.

## **Evidence Synthesis - Reviews in 2025**

Our summary of 2025 literature includes several types of publications synthesizing the literature: expert integrative reviews, and systematic literature reviews with or without meta-analyses. Systematic literature reviews use predefined search and selection methods consistent with established reporting standards (e.g. PRISMA). Meta-analyses quantitatively combine results across studies to estimate overall treatment effects. Network meta-analyses compare multiple interventions simultaneously by integrating direct and indirect study comparisons.

Overall, seventeen review summaries of EP interventions were published in 2025, including three expert integrative reviews, three meta-analyses, two network meta-analyses, and nine systematic literature reviews addressing specific indications and populations.

A table showing the review publications characteristics by type of review, and the citations are provided in the [supplementary materials](#).

### **Expert integrative reviews**

Three expert reviews published in 2025 provided integrative perspectives on the current state of energy psychology. Stapleton framed Clinical EFT as a fourth-wave, mind-body intervention for PTSD, synthesizing clinical principles and the accumulated evidence base and giving a detailed clinical guide for its use. Salicru provided a balanced scientist-practitioner review of EFT in mental health care, identifying strengths of the evidence base alongside remaining conceptual and methodological gaps. Feinstein reviewed both clinical evidence and psychological and physiological mechanisms, drawing from clinical trials, meta-analyses, biomarker findings, and dismantling studies, offering a comprehensive description of the mechanisms of acupoint tapping underlying the favorable outcome data.

## **Meta-analyses**

Two meta-analyses published in 2025 (each based on a systematic literature review) synthesized evidence for the effectiveness of EFT across key clinical indications: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and cancer-related anxiety, depression and anticipatory grief.

### PTSD (Chen et al)

An updated meta-analysis of thirteen studies involving 621 participants found that EFT produced large reductions in PTSD symptoms with very large effects compared to control conditions. Reductions in comorbid anxiety and depression were also observed, and treatment gains were maintained at three-month follow-up. Subgroup analysis indicated similar or stronger effects in veteran populations.

### Cancer (Zheng et al)

A meta-analysis of ten randomized controlled trials in people with cancer found that EFT was associated with meaningful reductions in anxiety and depression, as well as improvements in sleep and multiple dimensions of anticipatory grief. Benefits were observed across emotional, somatic, and psychosocial domains, supporting the relevance of EFT for cancer-related distress.

## **Network meta-analyses**

Two network meta-analyses published in 2025 included EFT alongside other psychological and psychosocial interventions. These systematic reviews evaluated EFT within broader comparative frameworks, including interventions for pandemic-related distress (Li et al.) and fear of childbirth (Zhou et al.). In both cases, EFT demonstrated beneficial effects similar to other established psychosocial approaches, signaling its increasing inclusion in mainstream comparative analyses.

## **Systematic literature reviews**

Eight additional systematic literature reviews published in 2025 included energy psychology interventions spanning a wide range of populations and conditions. These reviews reflect both the geographic expansion of EP research and the broadening range of clinical indications for which sufficient evidence now exists to support synthesis.

Four reviews focused on EFT treatments for anxiety disorders (Choi et al) and job stress and burnout (Rizzo et al). EFT and other therapies were reviewed for anxiety in social work trainees (Xi et al) and for Hwa-byung, a Korean culture-bound syndrome arising from long-term suppression of anger (Kwon et al).

Three systematic reviews included a focus on Spiritual EFT (SEFT) as one of a range of body-mind interventions for (a) anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic (Putro et al.); (b) pain in cancer patients (Kai et al); and (c) PTSD among natural disaster survivors

(Wardani et al). One systematic review (Hasibuan et al) evaluated studies of EFT and SEFT and found both overall effective for anxiety, depression, and stress in breast cancer patients, but that SEFT showed stronger benefits for the elderly than did EFT in an Indonesian population.

## **Summary**

Taken together, evidence from the reviews published in 2025 indicates that energy psychology interventions are supported by an expanding and increasingly diverse synthesis literature. Across meta-analyses, network meta-analyses, and systematic reviews, findings were consistently positive across populations, settings, and clinical conditions, with growing attention to comparative effectiveness (multi group studies) and broader clinical applications.

## **Selected Deeper Looks**

Notable studies included (a) clinical trials further demonstrating effectiveness of Thought Field Therapy and (b) Advanced Integrative Therapy and (c) the growing evidence for the use of EFT for persons with cancer.

### **Thought Field Therapy (TFT) clinical trial (Morikawa et al)**

An RCT evaluating a brief online intervention of Thought Field Therapy (TFT) for psychological distress during the COVID-19 period was conducted in Japan. Participants were assigned to TFT or a wait list that later completed TFT as well. They found that a single session of TFT significantly reduced stress-induced mental and physical reactions, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints.

### **Advanced Integrative Therapy (AIT) study (Olivé et al)**

Advanced Integrative Therapy (AIT) is an EP modality in which the therapist uses specific energy clearing procedures combining cognitive statements and somatic techniques for core traumas or limiting beliefs. A clinical cohort study of AIT showed large and clinically striking improvements in a large at-risk population. Twelve women who met PTSD DSM criteria due to intimate partner violence were given a brief trauma-focused group intervention based on AIT. At the end of fifteen structured sessions, a substantial and statistically significant reduction was found in all DSM-5 PTSD criteria, with 92% of participants no longer meeting criteria for the diagnosis.

### **Expanding Energy Psychology research evidence in cancer treatment**

Clinical trial evidence in cancer treatment has been increasing over time. In 2025 alone, five new clinical trials of EFT in cancer populations were identified. They focused on fear of cancer recurrence (Lazaroz et al; Tack et al), pain and depression (Kaplan et al), anxiety, sleep and anticipatory grief (Zheng et al), and pain, cortisol, and IL6 levels

(Hamidah et al). Additionally, two new systematic reviews of literature found EFT and SEFT, along with other complementary methods, to be effective in reducing pain, stress, anxiety, and depression (Kai et al.; Hasibuan et al.).

Furthermore, by 2025 there was enough evidence of effectiveness of energy psychology in cancer indications to support synthesis using meta-analysis. Zheng et al published a systematic literature review and meta-analysis of anxiety, depression, and anticipatory grief in cancer patients. A search of multiple literature databases including Google Scholar identified ten RCTs (778 patients) conducted in cancer inpatient or outpatient medical settings. Outcomes showed that EFT reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and many aspects of anticipatory grief, while improving overall sleep quality.

Because studies used different validated instruments, specific summary estimates of the clinical effect are not interpretable. However, findings consistently indicated clinically meaningful reductions across emotional, psychological and sleep-related outcomes.

## **The Research Base for Energy Psychology is Rapidly Expanding and Diversifying.**

### **Relation to the 2022 Global review**

The current review is a focused, one-year snapshot using a structured search of Google Scholar and other sources to find research evidence (clinical trials and reviews) published in 2025. It is a more complete look within a one-year period than the 2022 paper by Freedom, Hux and Warner. That high-level mapping of global EP research demonstrated the existence of a large body of international evidence in non-English and regional medical journals that weren't indexed in most literature databases, but visible via Google Scholar. It did not systematically review that literature but described an illustrative subset. Taken together, the 2022 and 2025 reviews show continued growth, increasing global uptake, and consolidation of evidence across populations and conditions.

### **Google Scholar as an important source of Energy Psychology research**

A large body of energy psychology research, particularly conducted in non-Western settings, is published in non-English or regional medical journals that are not indexed in standard Western literature databases. Google Scholar is being increasingly used as an important source to identify such research. Of eleven 2025 systematic reviews that specified the databases used, six named Google Scholar along with other more traditional literature databases.

## Energy Psychology research rapidly expanding

To assess changes in the pace of research, we searched within Google Scholar using the same text terms that were used in this study. Considering 5-year periods, the number of initial “raw” items identified is:

- 2010 to 2014: 88 per year average,
- 2015 to 2019: 178 per year average,
- 2020 to 2024: 404 per year average,
- 2025 alone: 512 items were identified.

Even though items were not assessed for eligibility, these findings reveal rapidly expanding published research on energy psychology, mostly EFT.

## Implications and Conclusion

Across clinical trials, meta-analyses, and other systematic reviews, the 2025 literature adds to a growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of energy psychology interventions across a range of populations and conditions.

Compared with earlier summaries of the EP literature, the 2025 evidence reflects a notable shift in the contexts in which EP interventions are being evaluated. While earlier reports were concentrated largely in psychological or mental health settings, a substantial proportion of recent studies – particularly outside Western countries – are embedded within medical and health-care systems, with populations defined by medical conditions and treatment delivered alongside conventional medical care.

These patterns suggest that, in many international contexts, EP interventions are being adopted pragmatically as part of integrative health care, and that research activity is following clinical use rather than leading it.

Future research may benefit from greater consistency in reporting the magnitude of benefits and follow-up outcomes; as well as include physiologic assessments and research exploring EP’s mechanisms of action. This will continue to inform both clinical practice and research development.

## Reference:

Freedom, J., Hux, M., & Warner, J. (2022). Research on Acupoint Tapping Therapies Proliferating around the World. *Energy Psychology, 14(1)*.

Freedom, J., Hux, M. (2025). Energy Psychology 2025 Research Update - [Supplemental Information](#)

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