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Reflexology Research in Europe

1994 to 2014

Leila Eriksen



2014

REFLEXOLOGY RESEARCH IN EUROPE 1994 till 2014

Reflexology is the second most common used CAM therapy in Denmark and is used in many European and other countries as well. Researchers from www.cambrella.eu estimate that half of EU citizens have experiences with CAM, Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Never the less, there is a lack of information regarding published reflexology studies. Mainly, because the studies are not published in peer reviewed scientific journals, and because results have been published in magazines, books and reports, in different language, not easy available online.

In **1994** the first *European Reflexology Conference* took place in Newcastle, UK. On the schedule was 5 minute to talk about research. Since then an increasing interest, regarding research, has taken place. 3 years later in **1997** I was invited to The ICR International Council of Reflexology world conference in London. Before the conference I had worked together with Danish colleges to collect information regarding reflexology studies to be put into a report. Later on, in 2001, 300 reflexology studies from around the world were collected and published in an “Analyses Document”. At the reflexology conference in London 1997 it became clear that it was an idea to establish a Nordic and a European Reflexology Research Group. During the last 20 years it has been a pleasure to follow what has been going on in the field. I have had the pleasure to be invited as speaker in many countries around the world and since 2008 participated yearly at the ISCMR research conferences, where I have met interesting researchers, doctors, healthcare providers and practitioners from around the globe. I have been working with patient associations, hospitals, universities and The Danish National Board of Health. It has been a long and exciting journey. A whole book could be written about this journey. What I have chosen to do in this paper is to primary focus on what goes on right now in **2014**. I hope that you will find the information useful and be inspired to take active part in continuing developing reflexology as a profession, for the benefit of the clients.

RiEN Reflexology in Europe Network

RiEN is a network of reflexology association, representing 20 countries and 20.000 reflexologists, around Europe (ref. RiEN web page March 2014). Since 1997, RiEN have had different research activities going on. RiEN have had a research group for many years, and the last couple of years RiEN have had two research specialists to support RiEN members by giving speeches on annual general meetings regarding research activities going on around the world, by answering e-mails and by offering “face to face” research consultation to RiEN members, and host countries. The two RiEN research specialist, has until now, been Tracey Smith from England and me from Denmark.

The experience from 25 years working with reflexology research, where 20 years work has been in the RiEN reflexology research field, and with cooperation with NRN, Nordic Reflexology Network and with ICR, The International Council of Reflexologists, has led to focus on the following **“high five”** headlines. That will be the main topic in this paper and the main topic in the short Power-point presentation, at the 8th European Reflexology Conference in Madeira, Portugal, May 2014;

“High five 2014”

- 1. Publish articles regarding research, available on carecam.dk & RiEN web-page**
- 2. Research consultations for reflexologist and researchers of interest**
- 3. Collaboration with a university in Norway, regarding Migraine project**
- 4. A project, regarding collecting information about published reflexology studies**
- 5. ISCMR Research conference in Miami, May 2014**

Ad 1) Publish articles regarding research, available on RiEN web-page

Articles and information regarding research has been written and can be downloaded for free on www.carecam.dk (click on the English flag) and on www.reflexeurope.org.

The first 4 articles, mention bellow, are recommended to be translated from English into other languages and to be used in reflexology schools, so students can learn about reserach in their basic education. This might help the reflexologists to know where to find information, to be used in daily practice, and for those of interest, how to do a study. Name of articles and publications;

- **What is reflexology Research (pdf)**
- **Finding Scientific Research (pdf)**
- **Research (pdf)**
- **Evidence Based Practice (pdf)**

- A Guide in Securing the Quality of Research Projects for Alternative Therapists
- Reflexology - A Therapy form in Progress
- Reflexology Clients Denmark and Sweden
- Reflexology & Acupuncture for Migraine
- Health Journals/Consultation sheets for Alternative Practitioner
- Guide Pamphlet for Alternative Practitioners regarding journals/Consultation Sheet

Ad 2) Research consultations for reflexologist and researchers of interest

RiEN wants to support its members to understand the concept of Research and to facilitate the spread of research knowledge throughout Europe. This is carried out by two research specialists.

The specialists offer research consultations at the annual general meetings and generally helping spread information and knowledge about scientific research into Reflexology.

The research consultations allow a chance to discuss intended project with the research specialists for guidance and comment on a one to one basis. These appointments can be pre booked. Anyone can apply for one. How much time per individual depends on the demand of the service.

If you want to apply for an appointment, you can send a research/study plan admitted in advance with ideas of type of project, problems to be studied, where to find the clients and outcome measurement etc. This is helpful for you as well as the research specialist, as it allows them to have

time to gather required information. One of the benefits of a research consultation is to be inspired and to point out pitfalls in the research process, so you find the best way to avoid them.

“A guide in Securing the Quality of Research Project for Alternative Therapists” is available on www.carecam.dk (click on the English flag) together with other relevant research information and links that might be helpful.

It is also possible for countries hosting the RiEN annual general meetings and conferences to make special appointments with the host country/association for board meetings, members meetings or other arrangement before or after the annual general meeting and/or conference.

3) Collaborate with a university in Norway, regarding Migraine project

The Registry of Exceptional Courses of Disease is run by the National Research Center in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NAFKAM), University of Tromsø, Norway.

NAFKAM register exceptionally good, as well as exceptionally bad courses of disease related to the use of complementary and alternative treatment. By an exceptionally good course of disease is meant that the patient experiences being healed or that the symptoms disappear, or that the symptoms are fewer and/or weaker. By an exceptionally bad course of disease is meant that the patient experiences having more symptoms and/or that the symptoms grow stronger.

The registry serves as a basis for research.



Foto: Trym Ivar Bergsmo

NAFKAM is collaborating with international acupuncture and reflexology organizations in the collection of **exceptionally good migraine courses** from Denmark, England, Norway, and Sweden related to acupuncture or reflexology. *Have you experienced an exceptionally good migraine course?* Then **we need your experiences!**

Please contact re. **Acupuncture:** Birte Nielsen, www.birtenielsen.dk – tel. (+45) 56 87 90 10 or the contact person re. **Reflexology:** Leila Eriksen, www.leilaeriksen.dk – tel. (+45) 26 18 95 90

The project is led by Prof. Dr. med. Vinjar Fønnebø, Chairman of the steering group of exceptional courses of disease, with help from Brit Drageset who is Manager of the Registry of exceptional courses of disease. Further information www.nafkam.no & www.carecam.dk.

Ad 4) A project, regarding collecting published reflexology studies

In the year 2000 RiEN, Reflexology in Europe Network, published a report “**Reflexology Research in Europe – a survey 2000**” (Eriksen. L), and in 2001 ICR, The International Council of Reflexologist, published a “Research Analysis Document of Reflexology Studies from Around the World”. This is more than 10 years ago and a number of activities have taken place since then.

It is important that citizens, reflexologists, researchers, politician and others of interest in reflexology, can get access to **information regarding knowledge, evidence based practice**, due to published paper regarding reflexology research, studies and data collections. Therefore, RiEN have worked together with a consultant and researchers to develop simple questionnaires, called “Summary Sheet”, to be send out to RiEN member associations and passed on to RiEN members.

With a representation of reflexology associations from 20 countries, representing 20.000 reflexologists, around Europe it is expected to collect knowledge based information. Information which has been difficult to reach before, due to the facts, that not all studies are available in public databases and the facts that studies are published in different language. The aim is therefore to collect **updated information** and to make the information available to the public. There are two questionnaires that can be used, depending on what kind of publication the information refers to;


- 1) A Summary Sheet - Regarding Reflexology Studies - Published in peer-reviewed journals*
- 2) A Summary Sheet - Regarding Reflexology Studies - Published, in magazines, books, reports

It is important to collect as much information as possible. We therefore kindly ask you to help us by finding all the information you can in your country regarding published study, fill in the questionnaires’ electronically and mail it to jklmn@eriksen.mail.dk or RiEN secretary. You are welcome to fill it out, in the language that the article is written in and/or in English, if you like.




We need your help!

There are 2 important things that you can do, that will be of great help to have reflexology grow as a professional profession.

 You can inspire for having the four research articles, mentioned in “ad 1” to be translated into your own language and enquire your reflexology association to put the four articles (in English and/or in your own language) on your association’s web-page. Also enquire the reflexology schools to put research information into the **curriculum**, so **common reflexologists**, in short terms, learn during their basic training and education, about the important of evidence based practice. Learn...

- ✓ “*What an abstract is?*”
- ✓ “*Where to find information about scientifically reflexology research articles?*”
- ✓ “*Where to find information about published reflexology studies?*”
- ✓ “*What they can do, if they want to make a study/project by themselves?*”

 And, you can spread the information, that RiEN work on a project, to collect information regarding published reflexology studies. Everyone can help with this. No matter if you are a reflexologist, a student or another person of interest to “give a hand”. If any questions you are welcome to contact me on e-mail; jklmn@eriksen.mail.dk or by mobile phone (+45) 26 18 95 90.

Ad 5) ISCMR Research conference in Miami, May 2014

The International Society for Complementary Medicine Research, ISCMR, is an international professional, multidisciplinary, non-profit scientific organization that is devoted to fostering Complementary and Integrative Medicine research and provides a platform for knowledge and information exchange to enhance international communication and collaboration. ISCMR Goals;

- Facilitate communication and collaboration among researchers and practitioners with an interest in research on a worldwide basis.
- Provide access to Complementary Medicine research information (internationally relevant events, conferences, publications).
- Provide access to an international database of ISCMR members.
- Provide reduced journal subscription rates and international meeting registration fees.
- Collaborate with individual researchers (or teams), regional societies, professional organizations and research networks to further mutual goals related to research and development agendas.
- Co-organize an annual International Congress for Complementary Medicine Research, ICCMR.

The International Research Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health, IRCIMH, will take place in **Miami, Florida, USA, on May 13-16, 2014**. The Congress is convened by the Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine, a group of 57 academic health centers and affiliated institutions. This Congress will also serve as the 9th annual International Congress on Complementary Medicine Research, ICCMR, sponsored by the International Society for

Complementary Medicine Research, ISCMR. The Consortium is committed to make this Congress the premier international forum for Integrative Medicine research.www.iscmr.org.

It has been a great pleasure to participate at those conferences during the past 6 years, since 2008. As mentioned below, with three research abstracts recognized as poster and oral presentations.

- 2008 Sydney - Participating with [carecam.dk](http://www.carecam.dk)
- 2010 Tromsø – Poster presentation regarding the mention “*Migraine Project*” (see page 3)
- 2011 Chengdu – Oral presentation regarding national surveys “*Reflexology Clients in Denmark and Sweden*”. Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Vol. 31 Supplement 2011. ISSN 0255-2922. Information on www.carecam.dk
- 2012 Portland – Poster presentation “*Experiences and Wishes from Danish Cancer Children and their families regarding CAM*”, Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
- 2013 London – with special focus on Pediatric Cam and visiting a Children Hospital.
- 2014 Miami – upcoming conference, a few days after the 8th European Reflexology Conference. RiEN Database Project regarding published studies, to be discussed.

This is, in short terms, the energy that has been put into the Reflexology Research field, due to my connection to RiEN, Reflexology in Europe Network. We are now writing 2014, and it's time for RiEN to find its way for the future. Therefore this little report has been put together. Hopefully it gives an idea of what has been going on in the past, what is going on at the moment, and, what can be considered, going on in the future.

Sincerely

Leila Eriksen



www.carecam.dk
www.leilaeriksen.dk

References/Links

www.srab.dk
www.pubmed.com
www.sciencedirect.com
www.nafkam.no
www.nifab.no
www.cambrella.eu
www.reflexeurope.org
www.icr-reflexology.org

For info: Report “*Zoneterapeutisk Fagforståelse*” (in process of being translated from Danish into English). On page 20 & 32, I have worked together with reflexology colleagues and researchers; to pass on information regarding “*Documentation/Research*”. The report has references to articles, journals, magazines and reports. The report can be downloaded for free on the Danish Reflexology Associations web-page; www.fdz.dk – www.zct.dk – www.t kz.dk