



# Effective Health Care

## Touch Therapy for Anxiety Disorders

### Nomination Summary Document

#### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Touch therapy for anxiety disorders is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.

#### Topic Description

**Nominator:** Individual

**Nomination Summary:** The nominator is interested in establishing the comparative effectiveness of touch therapy used in combination with talk therapy versus talk therapy alone in treating individuals with generalized anxiety disorders. The nominator hypothesizes that the combined approach could yield the same beneficial result to the patient in fewer sessions and is interested in using this approach with people with generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, panic attacks, or who are trauma victims.

##### Staff-Generated PICO

**Population(s):** Patients with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) or people with phobias, panic attacks, other anxiety disorders, or who are trauma victims

**Intervention(s):** Talk therapy in combination with somatic therapy (touch therapy)

**Comparator(s):** Talk therapy alone

**Outcome(s):** Treatment requires fewer therapeutic sessions to achieve same reduction in anxiety symptoms

**Key Questions from Nominator:**

1. In patients with anxiety disorders, what is the effectiveness of using a somatic-based therapy (touch) along with the traditional means (talk therapy alone) in treatment?

#### Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Very few studies have been conducted on the comparative effectiveness of touch therapy compared to any other treatment for improving symptoms of anxiety disorders or other mental health conditions. A 2007 systematic review by the Cochrane Collaboration titled *Therapeutic touch for anxiety disorders*

found no randomized controlled trials or quasi-randomized controlled trials of therapeutic touch for anxiety disorders that met inclusion criteria for the review.

- Robinson J, Biley FC, Dolk H. Therapeutic touch for anxiety disorders. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2007, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD006240. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006240.pub2.
  
- A scan for new literature published since the Cochrane review resulted in 3 published studies examining some form of touch therapy for the treatment of a broad range of mental health conditions. Therefore, this topic is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.