

ABSTRACT

PRADO, P.O.B. EXPLORATORY STUDIES OF THE PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE ROLFING METHOD OF STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION: creation, development and evaluation of questionnaires. Thesis, doctorate. PUC-SP(2006)

Empirical evidence indicates the importance of the Rolfing Method of Structural Integration for the field of Psychology. Ida P. Rolf's work is a holistic approach of organizing the human body structure in the gravitational field by rebalancing the myofascia (connective tissue) through special touch and movement education. The objective of the study described herein is to provide a systematic and consistent method for investigating the psychobiological nature of Rolfing and its intersection with the domain of psychosomatics. The author studied the power of questionnaires that had been developed for clinical research at NAPER (Brazilian Rolfing Association's Center for Clinical Practice, Research and Studies on Rolfing) and at Rolfing schools in Brazil and the United States, where the author had participated in the simultaneous elaboration, application and evaluation of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were used in connection with the Rolfing processes of 874 clients in three groups: 714 at NAPER and 160 in the Rolfing schools (55 in Brazil and 105 in the US). The questionnaire responses were evaluated both within each and among all of these three groups. The responses to closed questions were subjected to an SPSS quantitative analysis, applying statistical tests appropriate to the metrics of the questions and responses themselves. The responses to open questions were qualitatively analyzed with an SPAD.T method: for particular words, the frequencies and contexts of their uses were tabulated; then, words were grouped by conceptual affinity, and the contexts in which they appeared were analyzed. The themes that emerged from the responses, as well as their frequencies, were noted. These analyses of the data gathered in response to the questionnaires demonstrated the presence of a psychobiological dimension of Rolfing and, what's more, demonstrated to be an efficient tool for practitioners and students alike, regardless of cultural milieu. At the schools, clients' perceptions concerning their quality of life before and after the Rolfing process were evaluated through the WHOQOL questionnaire. The results were significant, and corroborated the indications of the NAPER results. The questionnaires also addressed the pre- and post-process intensity and frequency of reported pain; and indicated a significant decrease of both intensity and frequency of pain after the process. This was the case for both recent-onset and chronic pain, regardless of the location of the pain. The author posits that use of the questionnaires is, in and of itself, a mental reflexive activity – an activity that makes salient the psychobiological dimension of Rolfing and its value as a psychosomatic method. What's more, because the questionnaires further clinical, educational and research objectives simultaneously, their use highlights the relationship among those objectives. Based on his review of the evidence, the author sets forth a proposal for a revised questionnaire that comprises two levels, which could be explored independently or jointly. The first level consists of closed questions, which facilitates the collection of data for investigation. The second consists of open questions, which elicits reflection upon the psychobiological dimension of the work. Taken as a whole, this proposed questionnaire is an instrument of both research and teaching.

