Name:

Date:

The Benefits of Touch

Humans have five important senses they use to understand the world sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Of these, people tend to think hearing and sight are (24). However, some experts believe touch is just as necessary for human communication, relationships and health. This should not be surprising because touch is actually the first sense that babies develop. Moreover, there is now evidence that touch also has the ability to reduce anxiety and heal the body.

For example, a researcher named James Coen found that holding a loved one's hand can reduce stress. Using an MRI machine, Coen examined the brains of a group of married women. When a woman knew she would receive an electric shock to her ankle, the areas of her brain related to fear became active. However, when her husband touched her hand, (25) in those areas. Coen found that the women also felt less fear even when their hand was touched by a stranger, but to a lesser degree.

Other studies have looked at the effects that different kinds of touch, such as massage, have on health. In one study, it was found that massage causes a decrease in certain chemicals in the body called cytokines. These chemicals cause the body to feel pain. (26), massage could be particularly helpful for people suffering from frequent pain as a result of autoimmune disorders diseases where the body attacks itself. In response to these discoveries, many more doctors are now using touch to treat people for both mental and physical problems.

21. a. the most difficult b. more useful than smell
c. the most important d. more annoying than taste

22. a. she became cold b. she felt pain
c. feelings became clearer d. brain activity dropped

23. a. To make matters worse b. As usual
c. Even so d. For this reason

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