

Reviewer's report

Title: In Vitro Test of External Qigong

Version: 2 **Date:** 5 February 2004

Reviewer: brian jones

Reviewer's report:

Comments 1 and 2: We have added text to the Methods section that describes in more detail the instructions given to the practitioners. The fact that the practitioners were told their goal was to enhance the growth of the experimental cells is stated explicitly. (Acceptable)

We also add to the description of the pilot study on page 7 the fact that parallel experiments using a tumor cell killing model did not produce results that justified further analysis in the formal studies. (The authors really ought to give data to support this statement. They have still not acknowledged that fact that their model uses cell survival under sub-optimal culture conditions to assess the "power" of Qi. Under such conditions cells should not survive and therefore they are asking external Qi energy to attempt something that is not physiological.)

Comment 3: The question is whether the labels on the boxes un-blinded the experiment. They did not. We clarified this issue by revising the following text in the paragraph on Blinding Procedures: "Thus, the scientist handling the cells knew which cells were inside treatment boxes A and B but did not know what treatments (i.e., Qigong or sham) were delivered. Likewise, the scientist aware of the treatment schedule did not know which cells were being treated at any given time (i.e., which cells were in the boxes)." Also relevant to this question is the fact that the person counting colonies never saw the treatment boxes, only the cell culture plates after being removed from the treatment boxes and fixed. (Acceptable)

Comment 4: We believe the clarification for Comment 3 also addresses this comment of how experiments in which sham preceded Qigong were kept blinded. (Acceptable)

Comment 5: This is addressed in the revised manuscript by stating in the Blinding Procedure section that the cell cultures were fixed in Beijing prior to being transported back to San Francisco. (Acceptable)

Comment 6: Reviewer #1 asked that the raw data be provided as supplementary material. We have provided this in a Table as supplementary material. (Acceptable, although the authors still do not provide results for individual cultures or give standard errors)

Comment 7: We have changed Figure number 1 so that data points do not overlap in response to Reviewer #1's final comment. (Acceptable)