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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Greetings Friends!  There is a profound advancement in reflexology underway right now and I am so excited to share with you what we know so far.   After three years of planning, including fund-raising and securing official sanctions, Barbara and Kevin Kunz launched the first fMRI study in the United States in 20 years.    Their Neural Pathways of Applied Reflexology project sets out to analyze fMRI scans of the brain when pressure is applied to precise parts of the feet. The accompanying photos show Kevin positioned to lay his hands on a volunteer’s feet entering the MRI machine, and Barbara in the control room communicating sequencing instructions to Kevin.    The first goal of the project, like all pilot studies, is to establish a proof of concept; in this case, obtaining evidence that reflexology’s claims are even feasible and worthy of future research. Strong positive results of the pilot study will allow the authors to advance to the second stage, which hopes to look at how pressure applied to specific reflexes affects the brains and spinal cords of people living with complicated conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, stroke, and PTSD.   The pilot was conducted in Minneapolis at the Center for Magnetic Research, University of Minnesota School of Medicine on April 4 and 5. The Kunzes collaborated with tenured professor Dr. Stefan Posse, from the Department of Neurology at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and Dr. Essa Yacoub, an award-winning imaging radiologist at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine.   Thousands of brain scans were taken during this first round of the study; 800 scans within 5-minute periods. The reflexes contacted were the pituitary, vagus nerve, eye, adrenal gland, and temporal lobe. Following instructions given by Barbara, Kevin held constant pressure on each in a specified order for 8 seconds each, followed by a 12-second rest. Five minutes were spent on each volunteer. The next step, hiring post-docs to interpret the data collected, will take months to complete and require significant financial resources.   Kevin spoke to Dr. Posse a few days following the scans and was thrilled to hear him state that they had obtained “beautiful scans” and “solid data” of the parts of the brain that were stimulated by Kevin’s pressure on the foot reflexes. He went on to say that the scans were “exciting and very beautiful”, and perhaps enough to secure funding from the National Institutes of Health for follow-up studies. So, so exciting!   The husband and wife team of Barbara and Kevin Kunz are internationally recognized practitioners, teachers, researchers, and authors of numerous books on reflexology, You can follow the updates on this their latest project on their [Facebook page](https://floridaassociationofreflexologists.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1f380a531b479101245ec3dd5&id=f0abb7f472&e=2878688f60) or through their [Reflexology Research Project newsletter](https://floridaassociationofreflexologists.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1f380a531b479101245ec3dd5&id=b15df9c46e&e=2878688f60).   It's a powerful time to be involved in the field of reflexology. We are witness to a big step forward in our goal for recognition in the healthcare industry. I’m proud and inspired to be part of a new era emerging in our profession, and hope you are too!  Until next time! Karen Ball, [FAR newsletter editor](mailto:karen@academyofancientreflexology.com) | | |