

What One Medical Doctor, University Prof Has to Say about Infrared Saunas

Ever wonder what physicians think about infrared sauna therapy? Our friends over at [The Doctors' Prescription for Healthy Living](#) visited recently with medical school professor and family practice doctor Richard Beever about his thoughts on infrared saunas. Dr. Beever, who is on faculty at the [University of British Columbia's med school](#) (in Vancouver, Canada), has done some clinical research on the subject.

We're pleased to share his interview here:

Dr. Beever, B.Sc., M.D., CCFP, C.I., is doing more than any individual today to educate consumers and medical and health professionals alike about the importance of infrared sauna therapy for total overall health. He has three major publications on the topic of infrared sauna therapy, including one in the Canadian Family Physician on the overall benefits based on a major review of all published clinical studies. He has also focused on sauna use and diabetes and has begun to explore the overall health benefits of sauna therapy.

His insights have shown us that there is strong scientific evidence for this important health strategy. Quite apart from benefits for detoxification and pain, Dr. Beever touches on other areas of health, and has even discovered what he believes to be the best scientifically supported brand.



Healthy Living: What led you to conduct the studies?

Dr. Richard Beever: I was looking into purchasing a traditional sauna. In the process, I came across many advertisements for infrared saunas and noticed that there were claims of health benefits exceeding those of the traditional sauna. Being somewhat of a skeptic, I decided to do a literature search looking for evidence to back up these claims in the Canadian Family Physician (July 2009;55:691-696).

HL: How did the study finding surprise you?

RB: I was both surprised and reassured that there is high-quality research supporting infrared sauna therapy for treatment of congestive heart failure and high blood pressure. In addition, I also found very preliminary support for infrared sauna therapy in reducing chronic fatigue syndrome and for treating chronic pain.

HL: You've also looked at infrared sauna therapy and diabetes. What did you find?

RB: As a family doctor, I have been concerned that decreased quality of life in those with diabetes is associated with poor health outcomes. Infrared sauna treatments improve the quality of life for those with chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, and congestive heart failure. The objective of this study was to determine whether infrared saunas have a beneficial effect on quality of life in those with type 2 diabetes.

The setting was Fraser Lake, a rural village in central British Columbia, Canada. All patients of the Fraser Lake Community Health Center with type 2 diabetes were invited to participate in this study. The study consisted of 20-minute infrared sauna sessions three times a week over a three-month period. It's very preliminary data so we really do need more clinical studies, but so far I think we can safely say we have seen positive results and infrared sauna use may be associated with improved quality of life in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

HL: What would you say to people who wish to buy an infrared sauna for overall health or heart and circulatory health?

RB: Generally, I would feel comfortable in recommending infrared saunas, but I am comfortable more particularly with [Sunlighten](#), as I have done subsequent research examining the effects of their specific sauna and heating technology on quality of life, blood pressure, weight, cholesterol, sugar levels and in those with type 2 diabetes (another publication is pending).

A big thanks to David Steinman at The Doctors' Prescription for Healthy Living for sharing this interview with us for the Sunlighten blog. DP Healthy Living is a terrific supporter of Sunlighten, along with David's Green Patriot blog and podcast. If health and wellness are important to you, we highly recommend that you check out both Healthy Living and Green Patriot. <http://www.freedompressonline.com/> <http://www.greenpatriot.us/index.html>

References

- Beever R. The effects of repeated thermal therapy on quality of life in patients with type II diabetes mellitus. J Altern Complement Med. 2010 Jun;16(6):677-81.PMID: 20569036.
- Beever R. Far-infrared saunas for treatment of cardiovascular risk factors: summary of published evidence. Can Fam Physician. 2009 Jul;55(7):691-6. Review.PMID: 19602651.