Yoga and Meditation for Healthcare Professionals

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Preface
- No disclosures
- Ask questions
- Parking lot

Today
- Definition of Yoga
- Describe at least three benefits and limitations of yoga
- Understand the mechanisms of action of yoga
- Understand the range of yoga applications
- Experience a “Therapeutic Yoga Capsule”

What is Yoga?
- Enormous collection of practices:
  - Movements
  - Conscious breathing techniques
  - Progressive relaxation
  - Improving focus
  - Meditation
  - Living a balanced life

Top CIH modality
- NCCIH (NIH) defines yoga as one of the top 10 CIH modalities
- NIH - scientific investigation to determine efficacy and safety

Impact of yoga on the body and brain
Studies have shown that yoga affects perhaps more than 200 different processes in our body and in our brain. It affects virtually every tissue and every system in our body.

- P. Murali Doraiswamy, M.D.
  Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
  Duke University
Yoga Research

- Research challenges:
  1. Difficulty with developing control strategies/blinded
  2. Small sample sizes
  3. Funding

- Quality and growth trends in yoga research

Randomized, controlled trial of yoga in women with breast cancer undergoing radiotherapy.

- Stage 0 to 3 breast cancer patients (n=163) before starting radiotherapy (XRT)
- Randomly assigned to Yoga Group (n=53), Stretching (n=56) and wait-listed (n=54), 6-weeks program, three times a week
- Criteria studied: Self-report measures of QOL (Medical Outcomes Study 36-item short-form survey; primary outcomes), fatigue, depression, and sleep quality, and five saliva samples per day for 3 consecutive days were collected from 0 to 3 breast cancer patients (n=163) before starting radiotherapy (XRT beyond the benefits of stretching exercises, and these benefits appear to have long-term durability.

J Clin Oncol. 2014 Apr 1;32(10):1058-65
Mindfulness meditation for younger breast cancer survivors: a randomized controlled trial.

- Premenopausal women with early stage breast cancer (n=39); wait list control group (n=32)
- 6-week mindfulness group
- Criteria studied: stress, depression, as well as physical symptoms

**RESULTS:**
- Significant reduction in stress (P = .004)
- Marginal reductions in depressive symptoms (P=.094)
- Significant reductions in pro-inflammatory gene expression (P=.009) and inflammatory signaling (P=.001) at post-intervention.
- Improvements in secondary outcomes included reduced fatigue, sleep disturbance, and vasomotor symptoms and increased peace, meaning and positive affect (P < .05 for all).
- Intervention effects on psychological and behavioral measures were not maintained at the 3-month follow-up assessment, although reductions in cancer-related distress were observed at that assessment.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

Clinical trial underway

Examining: effects of yoga on people in cancer treatment with sleep problems

MA College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences University

Case study:

YogaCaps therapeutic group for those with Cancer

- Female – age late 60’s
- Breast cancer, Parkinson’s, diabetes, morbid obesity, hypothyroidism, lower leg lymphedema
- Progress over 4 years of weekly yoga
  - Parkinson medications cut in half
  - Walker eliminated; rare use of cane
  - Depression gone
  - 33 pound weight loss

Case study:

RxRelax Therapeutic Yoga group for those with chronic conditions

- Female – age late 60’s, single mother, now grandmother
- Debilitating pain and pervasive illness for 27 years
- Diagnosed as Lyme disease 13 years ago
- Panic and anxiety disorders with daily attacks
- Chronic insomnia
  - Trouble falling asleep and staying asleep
  - Best sleep average of 3-4 hours per night
- After one year of therapeutic group yoga
  - Decrease in anxiety: awareness of anxiety triggers, increased body tension awareness and less fatigue
  - No more panic attacks
  - Mental fog cleared
  - Pain diminished
  - Average of 6-8 hours of sleep per night, with a more rested feeling
  - "Peacefulness within me"
  - Started writing (her dream!) and wants to become a yoga teacher

Yoga’s impact on inflammation, mood, and fatigue in breast cancer survivors: a randomized controlled trial.

- Breast cancer (stages 0-III) survivors (n = 200), ages 27-76, variety of treatment
- 12 weeks, 90-minute yoga, twice per week — then normal routine with no yoga
- Criteria studied: impact on inflammation, mood, and fatigue. The main outcome measures were lipopolysaccharide-stimulated production of proinflammatory cytokines interleukin-6 (IL-6), tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF-α), and interleukin-1β (IL-1β), and scores on the Multidimensional Fatigue Symptom Inventory Short Form (MFSI-SF), the vitality scale from the Medical Outcomes Study 36-item Short Form (SF-36), and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CES-D) scale.

**RESULTS:**
- 3 months post-treatment, fatigue was lower in the yoga group (P < .002), vitality was higher (P=.02), and IL-6 (P = .027), TNF-α (P = .027), and IL-1β (P = .037) were lower for yoga participants compared with the control group.
- At 6-month point of study (3 months after formal yoga practice ended), fatigue was 57% on average lower, inflammation markers reduced by up to 20% in yoga group.

**CONCLUSIONS:**
- Chronic inflammation may fuel declines in physical function leading to frailty and disability. If yoga dampens or limits both fatigue and inflammation, then regular practice could have substantial health benefits.

JCO 2013.51.8860; published online on January 27, 2014
Is yoga safe? Is yoga for everyone?

- What if I can’t touch my toes?
- What if neuropathy/medication impairs my balance?
- Is it ok to do these poses with lymphedema?
- I’m already having hot flashes, is there something besides hot yoga?
- I might not be able to keep up or remember the movements...
- I can’t afford the classes...
- I haven’t exercised in years...
- If I get down on the mat, I’m not sure I can get back up...

Range of yoga applications

- Public yoga classes
  - Tend to focus on physical movements like: backward and forward bends, lunges, combination of twisting + weight bearing movements, perhaps arm balances and inversions... and the ability to get down onto the floor and get back up.
  - This may not be indicated for people with conditions like: heart disease, osteoporosis, joint replacement, lymphedema, high IOP, PTSD, etc.
  - Some classes are in heated/hot rooms.
  - A & P knowledge varies widely.
  - Price range: $10-20 per class.
- Private yoga classes (1:1)
  - Similar to hiring a personal trainer.
  - Instruction geared to individual level of experience.
  - Opportunity for feedback and questions.
  - Cost: $65 per hour and higher.
- Therapeutic group yoga
  - Opens access to yoga to every body and mind.
  - Geared to support specific health conditions.
  - Require registration and screening for inclusion.
  - Typically request a medical clearance from physician.
  - Held 1x/week, 6-8 week series, or on-going.
  - When person is ready they can move to a public class.
  - Tend to incorporate more breathing and meditative practices.
  - Held in accessible locations.
  - May build strong social support for participants.
  - Typically welcome healthcare providers to attend a class to observe/experience.
  - Cost ranges from $0-$40 per session.
- Yoga therapy (1:1)
  - Best for those who have chronic physical and mental health conditions.

Example: Therapeutic Yoga group

- Best for those who prefer privacy and/or seek individualized attention.
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Example: Therapeutic Yoga group at VAMC Manchester including pain management initiative

Free classes offered every day Monday-Friday

Located at selected hospitals, clinics & community centers in NH and MA.

Therapeutic Yoga at Nursing homes and VA hospital

...and it can be FUN 😊

Range of yoga applications

- 1:1
- Components
  - Assessment
  - Goals
  - Home practice
  - Follow up
  - Experience is geared to support specific health conditions.
  - Typically aims to integrate with medical care team.
  - Check to ensure instructor has specialized training.
  - Cost – typically $100 per hour and higher

Best for those who have chronic physical/mental health conditions and may require individualized care

Patient counseling points

- Yoga is not intended to replace medical care.
- Interview instructor and ask to observe a class.
- Potential questions to ask instructor:
  - Instructor qualifications and experience
  - Fees, policies, safety, etc.
  - Types of movements that class involves and modifications
  - Best ways to prepare for the class
  - Average number/age of people who attend
  - Is equipment required (mat, blocks, bolster, blanket, etc.). If provided, how often and in what way are they cleaned?
- With pregnancy or physical/mental health concerns:
  - Instructor’s experience with the specific condition
  - Accessibility, walking distance from door to class, etc.
  - Is the class trauma-sensitive, fragrance-free, etc.
- When visiting: do the observations match what was explained?
- Everyone uses marketing. Make sure some evidence supports the claims.
Yoga can be helpful for all of us...

- Supporting patients and families
- Self-care

Q&A

Thank you!

more info

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