



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Physiology

BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR MEDICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS - A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED STUDY

KEY WORDS: yoga, meditation, health benefits

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ABSTRACT

Aim and Objective: A Survey on awareness of yoga and its benefits on health among Medical college students. **Materials and Methods:** Questionnaires were circulated among college students and got about 100 responses to get information regarding their opinion on practicing yoga, their fears on practicing yoga and their awareness on its advantages and disadvantages. **Background:** Stress and anxiety have been found to be contributors to any chronic diseases. It decreases the quality of life, even with pharmacological treatments. Efforts are taken to find non pharmacological therapies to relieve stress and anxiety, and yoga is one option for which results are promising. **Results:** Most of the students were aware of benefits of yoga practice yet not ready to practice it regularly due to their busy schedule.

INTRODUCTION

A 3,000 year old tradition, yoga, is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) (1).The word "yoga" comes from a Sanskrit root "yuj" which means union, or yoke, to join, and to direct and concentrate one's attention (2,3) Regular practice of yoga promotes strength, endurance, flexibility and facilitates characteristics of friendliness, compassion, and greater self-control, while cultivating a sense of calmness and well-being (4,5).

Modern man has become a machine, working from the morning till sunset; almost all the sections of the population have become mechanical machines. Young adulthood is a period of major transition often accompanied by increased stress. College students experience very high levels of stress and often lack the time or resources to manage their stress effectively. The latest American College Health Association (ACHA, 2014) report indicated that approximately half of students reported more than average or tremendous stress within the last 12 months (6). Few programs have incorporated mind-body skills approaches such as yoga and meditation, which are known to be effective self-regulatory and stress management skill (6,7). The NMC guidelines recommend yoga training is initiated in the foundation course, preferably for one hour in the morning during the orientation week. "Yoga practice shall be maximum for one hour every day for 10 days beginning from June 12 every year to culminate on International Yoga Day, June 21, to be celebrated in all medical schools across the country. These may be practiced by all batches of MBBS.

Yoga is a holistic system of mind-body practices for mental and physical health involving multiple components such as physical postures and exercises to promote strength and flexibility, breathing exercises to enhance respiratory functioning, deep relaxation techniques to cultivate the ability to mentally and physiologically release tension and stress, and meditation/mindfulness practices to enhance mind-body awareness and improve attention and emotion regulation skills (8). Yoga as a general term that encompasses breathing techniques, postures, strengthening exercises and meditation (9). Yoga affects the lifestyles of many individuals ranging from child and teen to senior (3,6).

This study is to analyze the awareness on yoga and its benefits among college students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A questionnaire was prepared to create awareness about health benefits of yoga among student community.

Questionnaires were circulated among medical college students and got about 100 responses. They gave information regarding their opinion on practicing yoga, their fears on practicing yoga and their awareness on its advantages and disadvantages. After the questionnaire was completed, a basic idea about benefits of yoga was given. The questionnaire is given below-

- 1) Do you think practicing yoga is good for your health?
Yes No Maybe
- 2) If yes, what style of yoga have you tried?
- 3) How often do you practice?
Daily Weekly Never Other
- 4) Do you think yoga is good for all age group's health?
Yes No Maybe
- 5) Do you find any noticeable changes following yoga practice?
Yes No Maybe
- 6) Would you recommend yoga practice to your friends?
Yes No Maybe
- 7) Are you aware that yoga practice helps your body withstand strain, tension and fight against stress related pains?
Yes No Maybe
- 8) Are you aware that yoga is applicable for psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia?
Yes No Maybe
- 09) Do you think your anger is controlled by practicing yoga?
Yes No Maybe
- 10) Do you think yoga practice has increased your concentration in studies?
Yes No Maybe

RESULTS

An overall response rate of 100% was achieved as all students responded properly. The diagram below explains their awareness on benefits of yoga.

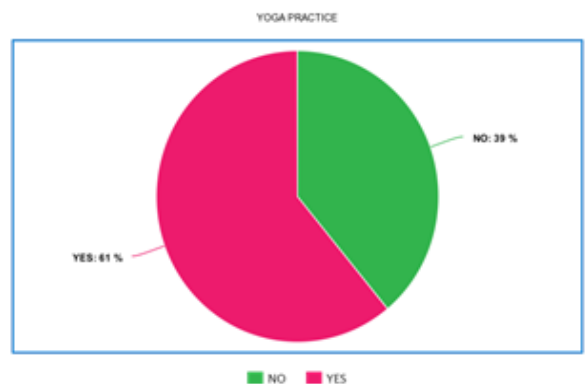
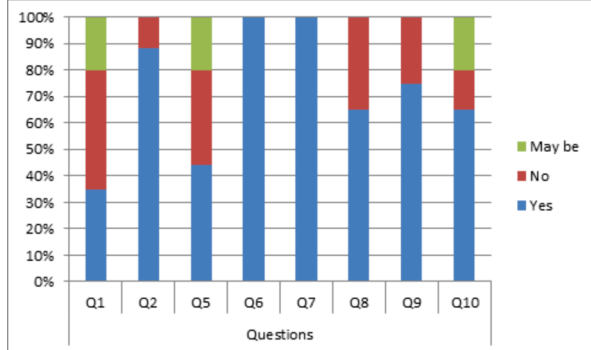


Table – Habit Of Practicing Yoga Regularly

Options	Questions							
	Q1	Q2	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Yes	35%	88.3%	44%	100%	100%	65%	75%	65%
No	45%	11.7%	36%	0	0	35%	25%	15%
May be	20%	0	20%	0	0	0	0	20%



DISCUSSION

The benefits of a practice in yoga range from a small degree to a life changing level (3). Out of 100, 61% students have the habit of practicing yoga regularly. Most common reason for taking yoga practice is health concerns followed by fitness, refreshment, mind peace. 44% students found changes in health conditions after yoga. This practice has been implemented to alleviate both mental and physical ailments, including bronchitis, chronic pain and muscle weakness (7,8). 88.3% accept yoga practice is good for health and all students recommended yoga practice to their friends. Yoga practitioners often describe having more energy, vitality, and balanced emotions (4,5). The most preferred form of yoga is yoga Pranayama and Zumba yoga.

According to them the most common initial fears and most challenging aspects of yoga was pain, tiredness etc., Majority of the students think yoga practice controls anger. Stress and anxiety have been found to be contributors to many chronic diseases. It decrease the quality of life, even with pharmacological treatments. Efforts are taken to find non pharmacological therapies to relieve stress and anxiety, and yoga is one option for which results are promising. 65% of the students say that yoga practice increase concentration in studies.

CONCLUSION

Yoga and Meditation is a scientific discipline of removing or eradicating stress and tension at its source (9, 10). Meditation and Yoga reduces the effects of stress among the students and induces a feeling of calm and peacefulness, combats depression and anxiety, counteracts helplessness and weakness, and thus increases self - esteem and internalized locus of control (11,12).

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