





Individualized yoga for reducing depression and anxiety, and improving well-being: A randomized controlled trial

Article in Depression and Anxiety · March 2016
Impact Factor: 4.41 · DOI: 10.1002/da.22502

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Abstract

Background:

Depression and anxiety are leading causes of disability worldwide. Current treatments are primarily pharmaceutical and psychological. Questions remain about effectiveness and suitability for different people. Previous research suggests potential benefits of yoga for reducing depression and anxiety. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of an individualized yoga intervention.


Methods:

A sample of 101 people with symptoms of depression and/or anxiety participated in a randomized controlled trial comparing a 6-week yoga intervention with waitlist control. Yoga was additional to usual treatment. The control group was offered the yoga following the waitlist period. Measures included Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Short-Form Health Survey (SF12), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE), Flourishing Scale (FS), and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC2).

Results:

There were statistically significant differences between yoga and control groups on reduction of depression scores (-4.30; 95% CI: -7.70, -0.01; P = .01; ES -.44). Differences in reduced anxiety scores were not statistically significant (-1.91; 95% CI: -4.58, 0.76; P = .16). Statistically significant differences in favor of yoga were also found on total DASS (P = .03), K10, SF12 mental health, SPANE, FS, and resilience scores (P < .01 for each). Differences in stress and SF12 physical health scores were not statistically significant. Benefits were maintained at 6-week follow-up.

Conclusion:

Yoga plus regular care was effective in reducing symptoms of depression compared with regular care alone. Further investigation is warranted regarding potential benefits in anxiety. Individualized yoga may be particularly beneficial in mental health care in the broader community. 

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