

Motivators for Yoga Therapy: A Convenience Sampling Survey from India

Babita Vishwakarma¹, Sachin Kumar Sharma², Shirley Telles³

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Abstract

Background: Previously, the reasons to practice yoga were reported in non-clinical populations. Patients' motivators for yoga as therapy have not been reported.

Methods: A convenience sampling survey was conducted on 1077 patients (age range: 18-83 years; M:F=57.17:42.83) at a yoga therapy in India. Participant reported motivators for yoga therapy were assessed with a multiple choice questionnaire.

Results: The three most common motivators for yoga therapy were: (i) advice from close associates (26.3 percent), (ii) disease symptom reduction (20.0 percent) and (iii) interest in yoga (14.9 percent). The motivators to yoga differed for patients with and without prior exposure to yoga (Chi square =79.42, df = 16, p<0.001, Cramer's V = 0.29).

Conclusions: In the present clinical population, the motivators for yoga as a therapy differ based on prior exposure to yoga.

Keywords: Yoga Therapy; Motivators; Survey; Yoga Experience.

INTRODUCTION

The National Institute of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine presented a strategic plan to increase the understanding about complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use including factors

motivating patients to seek CAM therapies.¹

Previous reports from non-clinical populations on motivators to practice yoga included physical fitness and stress management.^{2,6}

The factors motivating patients to seek yoga as therapy can be expected to differ from non-clinical populations. Knowledge about the reasons patients seek yoga therapy could help develop effective strategies to promote yoga therapy. To our knowledge there is no previous report on patients' motivators yoga therapy. Hence, the present study was conducted with the primary objective to rank the motivators patients report as their reasons to seek yoga therapy. A secondary aim was to determine whether the motivators of patients with prior exposure to yoga differ from those with no prior exposure to yoga.

Author Affiliation: ¹Assistant Scientist, ²Head of Department, ³Research Advisor, Department of Yoga Research, Patanjali Research Foundation, Haridwar 249405, Uttarakhand, India.

Corresponding Author: Shirley Telles, Research Advisor, Department of Yoga Research, Patanjali Research Foundation, Haridwar 249405, Uttarakhand, India.

E-mail: shirleytelles@gmail.com

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MATERIAL METHODS

This convenience sampling survey is reported according to *STROBE* guidelines. The study (data collected from November 2022 - June 2023) recruited patients registered for yoga therapy in India with no incentive for participation. Respondents filled in the survey with support from a researcher if required. The study was approved by the institution ethics committee (approval number: PRF/YRD/022/026). Respondents were included if they were aged 18 years and above. Mental health conditions were the only criterion for exclusion. One thousand and seventy seven patients filled in the survey. After excluding one hundred and eight incomplete responses, the responses of nine hundred and sixty-nine patients of both genders (F:M=415:554; aged 18-83 years) were analyzed. The baseline characteristics of the patients are given in Table 1. Signed informed consent was obtained from each patient. The survey was developed to determine the motivators to yoga as a therapy. The survey had two parts. The first part of the survey asked the patients about their socio-demographic information i.e., age, gender, education, occupation, disease and prior experience of yoga. The second part of the survey had a close ended question about patients’ motivators for yoga therapy (i.e., Question 1(a) ‘Why did you register for yoga therapy? Mark any one option’ with eighteen possible responses which were presented in randomized order. The follow-up question for 1(a) was an open-ended question (i.e., Question 1(b) ‘if none of the responses provided in Question 1(a) apply to you, please mention your reason to choose yoga therapy in the space below’.

Each patient selected one response for Question 1(a) hence no patient felt that the responses provided did not apply to them. The questions and responses were selected based on the clinical and research experience of the authors (range 7–30 years). The survey was developed in English and translated to Hindi using a standard procedure. The survey was presented in both languages. The second part of the survey has been depicted in Fig. 1.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24.0. Percentages of respondents who selected a particular response were obtained.

Survey responses which were incomplete in any section or were incorrectly filled in (e.g., where respondents selected multiple responses when asked to select one) were excluded.

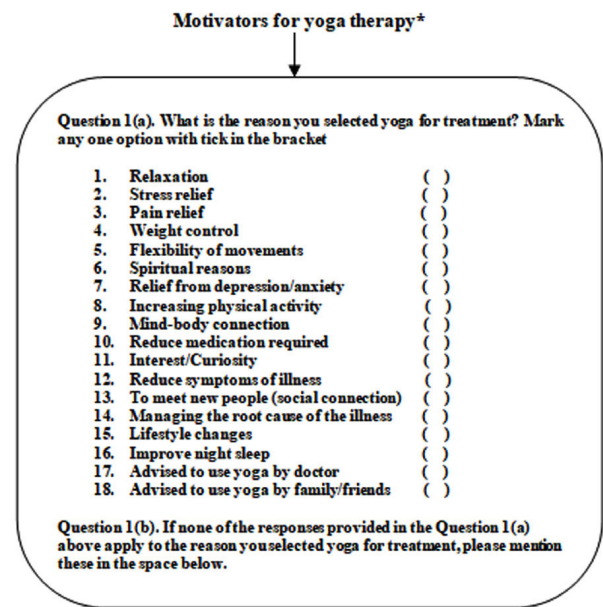


Fig. 1: Survey questions related to motivators to yoga therapy.

*Please Note: The responses to the questions 1(a) were randomized after arranging the responses in alphabetical order. The responses are presented in randomized order.

RESULTS

The response rate for the survey was 89.97%. For the present study, with a sample size of 969, Cohen’s $w = 0.19$ (determined from the motivators to receive yoga as therapy), level of significance (α) = 0.05, and $df = 16$, the power was 0.9843. The baseline characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 1.

Four hundred and ninety seven (51.3 percent) respondents had prior exposure to yoga. The motivators for yoga therapy were noted for the whole group, yoga experienced respondents (51.3%) and yoga naïve respondents (48.7 percent).

Table 1: Baseline characteristics of the patients.

Characteristics	n = 969
Age (years)	
Group mean age \pm SD	45.51 \pm 14.8
Age range	18 -83
Age categories, n (%)	
18-44 years	464 (47.9)
45-59 years	309 (31.9)
60 years and above	196 (20.2)
Gender, n (%)	
Male	554 (57.2)
Female	415 (42.8)
Education levels, n (%)	

Table Cont....

No Education	87 (9.0)
School (10 years)	430 (44.4)
Graduation (15 years)	260 (26.8)
Post Graduation (17 years)	154 (15.9)
Professional (17+ years)	38 (3.9)
Prior experience in Yoga, n (%)	
Yes	497 (51.3)
Experience in months (range)	7-522
Three most common health conditions based on ICD 11, n (%)	
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system or connective tissue	280 (28.9)
Endocrine, nutritional or metabolic diseases	127 (13.1)
Diseases of the digestive system	99 (10.2)

DISCUSSION

Nine hundred and sixty-nine patients included yoga experienced (51.3 percent) and yoga naïve (48.7 percent) respondents.

The three most common motivators to register for yoga therapy were: (i) advice from close associates (26.3 percent), (ii) disease symptom reduction (20.0 percent) and (iii) interest in yoga (14.9 percent). While the most common motivator for yoga experienced respondents was 'interest in yoga', other motivators in both yoga experienced and yoga naïve respondents were the same as the whole group.

Patients seeking yoga therapy based on their close associates' advice are externally motivated for therapy.^{7,9} External factors are considered less effective than placing responsibility for change internally.^{8,9} In contrast, the second and third most common motivators (i.e., 'to reduce symptoms of disease' (20.0 percent) and 'an interest in yoga' (15.0 percent) are intrinsic factors. Interest in yoga (the most common reason among yoga experienced respondents) also shows intrinsic motivation. Dissemination of information about yoga to generate interest among patients about integrating yoga as therapy along with mainstream healthcare would be useful to involve patients in managing their disease through sustained yoga practice.

The findings of the present study are from patients belonging to twenty one out of a total of twenty eight states in India registered at a single yoga therapy center. Extending the study to other centers would help generalize the findings.

In summary, factors motivating patients to seek yoga therapy were (i) advice from close associates

(26.3 percent), (ii) disease symptom reduction (20.02 percent) and (iii) interest in yoga (15 percent). Interest in yoga was the chief motivator of yoga experienced patients. Patients motivated to seek yoga therapy based on interest and wish to manage their disease should be encouraged by informative programs about yoga.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, factors motivating patients to seek yoga therapy were (i) advice from close associates (26.3 percent), (ii) disease symptom reduction (20.02 percent) and (iii) interest in yoga (15 percent). Interest in yoga was the chief motivator of yoga experienced patients. Patients motivated to seek yoga therapy based on interest and wish to manage their disease should be encouraged by informative programs about yoga.

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