

Effect of yoga therapy on patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain: a prospective randomised wait list-controlled trial

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Background

Musculoskeletal conditions are one of the most common causes of chronic non-malignant pain in adults.¹ Continuous pain significantly impacts patients physiologically and psychologically, lowering their quality of life as well as imposing a financial burden.²

We examined the efficacy of yoga therapy on patients with mild to moderate chronic musculoskeletal pain.^{3,4}

Methods

This was a randomised wait list-controlled trial conducted between June 2013 and April 2015 at multiple centres. Eligible patients were aged 18–60 years; clinically diagnosed with musculoskeletal conditions including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, low back pain, joint/muscle pain, or chronic non-malignant pain with mild to moderate intensity. The primary efficacy endpoint was the change in box scale-11 pain scores. Secondary outcome included sleep quality and quality of life. Patients' satisfaction was reported through a scale of 0–10 at the end of the intervention.

Results

A total of 98 patients completed the analysis. The mean box scale-11 had statistically significant improvement from baseline to 8 weeks, which was maintained until the end of the study week 16 ($p < 0.0001$). Sleep quality improved to 'good' in 67% of patients. By week 8, the mean levels of functioning for all quality of life domains improved ($p < 0.001$), which continued to improve by the end of week 16 ($p < 0.0001$).

Conclusions

Yoga therapy provides effective pain relief as a 16-week treatment for patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain. More studies are needed to examine the long-term efficacy of yoga therapy. ■

References

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