



Frontiers

## **Psychological approach of Yoga for Cancer patients**

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### **A B S T R A C T**

Yoga has been practiced in India for thousands of years to improve physical, mental, and emotional well being, but now it became famous worldwide. Yoga combines breathing, postures and meditation to lead a state of relaxation, physical health, happiness, and peace. Yoga helps to reduce symptoms and side effects of the diseases, So that nowadays Yoga is very popular as a complementary and alternative therapy to get relief from the side effects of the disease. Today Cancer is a major problem worldwide. Cancer patients have so many side effects of treatment such as pain, fatigue, nausea, and psychological disorders such as anxiety, insomnia, stress, and depression. Yoga may help to relieve some of the symptoms linked to cancer. Several empirical studies in Yoga conducted on Cancer patients. This study aimed to systematically review the evidence based researches and to conduct an analysis of the psychological approach of Yoga as a complementary and alternative therapy for cancer patients.

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### **Introduction:**

Modern lifestyle has a negative effect on one's physical, psychological, social and spiritual health. The reasons for such problems are multiple but some of them are lack of exercise, spending much time on computers, phones and machines, using technology for easing life, sitting long hours in office, and unbalanced diet. As a result large population suffering from diabetes, heart disease, different types of cancers and psychological disorders. Cancer is a major problem of today. According to the report released by the ICMR and the Bengaluru – based National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research, in India, the total

number of cancer cases in men is estimated to be 6,79,421 in 2020 and may reach 7,63,575 in 2025. Among women the total number of incidence cases is estimated to be 7,12,758 in 2020 and likely to reach 8,06,218 in 2025, breast cancer (2,38,908) is expected to be the most common site of cancer in 2025, followed by cancer in lung (1,11,328) and mouth (90,060). There will be 13.9 lakh cases of cancer in India in 2020, and that this number is likely to rise to 15.7 lakh by 2025. The projected number of patients with cancer in India is 1,39,21,79 for the year 2020 and the common 5 leading sites are breast, lung, and mouth (1). The

projected number of patients with cancer in India is 1,392,179 for the year 2020 and the common 5 leading sites are breast, lung, mouth, cervix, uteri, and tongue (2). Among males, there was also a significant increase in the cases of cancers of colon, rectum, and prostate in Bangalore, Chennai, and Delhi while among women there was a significant increase in the rate of cancers related to breast, uterus, ovary, and lungs. One woman dies of cervical cancer every 8 minutes in India (3). The World Cancer report said that one in 10 Indians will develop cancer during their lifetime and one in 15 Indians will die of cancer(4). Several studies in the past decade had showed that Punjab has higher incidence of Cancer than the rest of Country. There are at least 90 cancer patients for every 1, 00000 population in Punjab, Punjab, the Cancer capital of India. Government survey shows cancer cases in the state exceed national average (5). Cancer is most common cause of death after cardiovascular disorder worldwide.

#### **Psychological disorders of cancer patients:**

A Cancer diagnosis can affect the physical, mental and emotional health of patients and their families and caregivers. The most common psychiatric disorders of Cancer patients are depression, stress, anxiety, sleeping and adjustment disorders. Psycho-oncology is a broad approach to cancer therapy which treats the emotional, social, and spiritual distress which often accompanies cancer patients. One third of patients with cancer will experience distress which requires evaluation and treatment. (6). Psychosocial oncology is a multi-disciplinary field of practice and, as a recently

developed speciality, covers the psychological, social and behavioural dimensions of cancer(7). If the psychological disorders left untreated, specially depressive disorders, they may result in poor treatment compliance, increased hospital stays and reduced quality of life (8).

#### **Psychological approach of Yoga for Cancer patients:**

The psychological approach of yoga is an approach to psychology based on the Indian yogic traditions, the characteristics spirit of the Indian scripture known as the Vedas. It is a psychology, therefore, rooted in Indian philosophy and a life affirming spirituality (9). Yoga psychology is both a positive and a normative science. It not only analyses human personality and its growth, but sets normative ideals and prescribes techniques to achieve such objectives. Yogic psychotherapies such as prarthana, mantra sadhana, spiritual counselling, pranayama, yajna, sankirtana, svadhyaya, and vrata anushthana plays an important role.(10). Yoga psychology offers practices to enhance mental health and alleviate the symptoms of psychological ill- ease or mental illness, using mind- body- lifestyle interventions to cultivate a healthy, productive, flourishing life (11). Yoga psychology is the theoretical basis for yoga psychotherapy. Yoga psychotherapy plays a vital role in the successful treatment and management of physical, psychological and spiritual conditions. Yoga psychology can also be called the science of the ‘subtle body,’ the part of us that lies between and links the physical body and the spiritual, or causal body, the subtlest part

of us. Yoga Psychology is the science of the embodied relationship between consciousness and mind (12). A great number of studies demonstrated that contemplative techniques like meditation and yoga have been successfully employed in the treatment of mental disorders, such as anxiety, stress, depression, and panic, whether as complementary or the main intervention (13). An integrated approach of yoga intervention modulates the stress and DNA damage levels in breast cancer patients during radiotherapy (14). Cancer patients always experience considerable levels of psychological distress. Psychological health in cancer patients is defined by the presence or absence of positive wellbeing and psychological growth. It is determined by the balance between two, classes of factors. The stress and burden posed by the cancer experience and the resources available for coping with this stress and burden (15). An integrated approach to yoga therapy decrease climacteric symptoms, perceived stress, and neuroticism in pre menopausal women better than exercise (16). A pilot study was performed by, Anand et. al to evaluate feasibility and to test the effects of pranayama on Cancer associated symptoms ( Fatigue, sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression, stress) and quality of life. Sixteen participants were included in the final intent to treat analysis. Pranayama improved symptoms and quality of life scores. Statistical significance shows that pranayama may improve sleep disturbance, anxiety, and mental quality of

life (17). It will be beneficial for Cancer patients if they use Yoga as an alternative therapy along with their medicine(18).Yoga may be a possible adjunctive therapy for Cancer patients to help manage psychological distress and to improve quality of life(19). Supportive treatments are increasingly used to alleviate distress in Cancer (20). Yoga can be used for managing treatment-related symptoms and anxiety, to improve quality of life in breast cancer outpatients (21, 22). Yoga can be recommended as an intervention to improve psychological health during breast cancer treatment (23). Yoga therapy may be used to alleviate anxiety symptoms in cancer patients (24)

#### Conclusion;

Most of the studies with yoga and meditation intervention have been done on breast cancer patients. We need to evaluate the effects of these interventions in other malignancies, head and neck, lung and cervical cancer patients (25). In this study several randomized control group trial, evidence based researches and review papers were reviewed. Several research studies shows that yoga improved mood states, symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression reduction and improved quality of life of cancer patients. This review study suggested that Yoga interventions might be recommended as an alternative and complementary therapy to improve psychological health of cancer patients, and Yoga has a psychological approach to improve the psychological disorder and quality of life of cancer patients.



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