

Impact of Regular Yogic Practices on the Mental Health of Third-Year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Today not only in India but all over the world people are suffering from several mental health problems. Regular yoga is an important form of physical exercise that includes various body postures, breathing techniques, and meditation. Regular practice of yoga can help relieve stress, reduce anxiety levels, reduce depression, improve sleep quality, and enhance the quality of life. The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of regular yogic practices on the mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students. For this, a total of 39 BAMS 3rd-year students of the age group of 22 to 27 years were purposively selected as a sample from Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Kadamkuan, Patna (Bihar). A cross-sectional survey was conducted. The pre-test was done in August 2022 before the yoga practice, and the post-test was done 45 days after the yoga practice in September 2022 on the same respondents. Data were collected using the “Mental Health Battery (MHB)” constructed and standardized by Singh and Sengupta (2000). The obtained results revealed that the level of mental health of BAMS 3rd-year students before regular yoga practice was not good as compared to after regular yoga practice. In conclusion, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between regular yoga practice and the mental health of BAMS 3rd- year students. Regular yoga practice can improve mental health.

Key words: BAMS, Yogic Practices, and Mental Health.

Background

According to Brooks, et al., (2011), in most health-care systems, whether publicly funded or privately funded, and across all ages, genders, seniority, and specialties, doctors have higher rates of anxiety and depression than the

general population and other professional groups. It can be said that doctors have a mass of clearly defensive characteristics, including career and financial-security, high-level status, and a usually rewarding

job. However, doctors are just as exposed to risks associated with a hereditary predisposition, early disturbing life events, later sadness, illness, or relationship breakup as anyone else. According to Gabbard (1985), our society considers doctors as a profession which has many additional risk factors. From an early age, they are highly driven, compulsive, competitive, individualistic, and ambitious – characteristics that can go into overdrive when stressed. A doctor works hard and achieves success but he blames himself for not being able to provide the necessary and proper care to his patients. As a result, doctors suffer from low self-esteem, guilt, and a sense of failure. In order to survive a lifetime in the field of medicine or treat patients, doctors must also develop defences against a variety of psychological problems, mainly dissociation, and depersonalization. Workloads lead to a lack of connection with themselves and others, leading to emotional states that contribute to dissatisfaction and an increased risk of suicide. Lindemann et al. (1996) conducted a systematic review of the literature on suicide and found that physicians estimated suicide rates to be higher than the general population, with a range of 1.1 to 3.4 for men, and 2.5 to 5.7 for women. According to the National Mental Health Survey of Doctors and Medical Students, Beyondblue (2013), anaesthetists, psychiatrists, and general practitioners appear to be associated with higher mental risk. The survey also found that nearly a quarter of doctors reported having suicidal thoughts at least once

in the past 12 months (24.8%). The study also found that suicidal thoughts were significantly higher among doctors than among other professionals and the general population.

We all know that mental health especially involves our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Good mental health for a person helps to deal with any kind of adjustment and good judgment anywhere. Not only this, good mental health for any person helps in solving any problem and dealing with bad habits. We can understand the third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) student as an adolescent, where good mental health can help them develop a balanced personality as well as develop positive mental health, which can help in directing all their energy in the proper direction. According to Saraswati (2000, & 2006), maintaining this balance requires a proper balance between mind, body, and spirit. Regular yoga practice is the science of leading a person to live right, as it aims to incorporate it into daily life. It works on all aspects of a person such as mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual.

The word yoga means “unity” and is derived from the Sanskrit word “yuj” which means to join in unity. In spiritual terms, yoga is described as the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. According to Saraswati (2002), on a practical level, regular yoga practice is a means of establishing balance and harmony among the mind, body, and emotions.

In Yoga Vidya, a person is believed to be a mental, physical, and spiritual being. In other words, it can be said that regular yoga practice helps in balanced development among all three i.e., mental, physical, and spiritual. Regular yoga practice is considered to be one of the most important techniques to deal with insecurities about changes in one's body, to be fit in stressful situations, and uncertainty about the future. According to regular yoga principles, imbalances in a person's psycho-somatic and pranic systems are better managed and prevented from developing various diseases. Not only this, regular yoga practice helps to balance the human body and remove toxins from inside the body and promote healthy living. According to Sarason and Agnihotri (1982); Sushil (2019); Telles, Nagarathna, and Nagendra (1994); Kumar (1993), most of the studies in the field of yoga show beneficial effects of regular yoga practices in the management of depression, anxiety and other types of neurotic disorder. Not only this, these people found in the results of their studies that for people who regularly consume drugs and alcohol, selective yoga practice is beneficial to get rid of it. It has also been observed in some studies that regular yoga practice plays an important role in reducing negative and aggressive thoughts in a person and calming the mind. Richard, and Patricia (2005) found in the results of their studies that regular yoga practice relieves a person from psychological diseases such as anxiety, depressive illness, neurosis, etc.

Not only in India but all over the world there is growing evidence of various psychological problems among medical professionals like anxiety, stress, depression, the feeling of fatigue, etc. due to which patients are not treated properly. Yoga is known to be an ancient Indian science that helps in improving physical, mental, social, and spiritual health. Regular yoga is an important form of physical exercise that includes various body postures, breathing techniques, and meditation. Regular practice of yoga can help relieve stress, reduce anxiety levels, reduce depression, improve sleep quality, and enhance the quality of life. Therefore, this study was designed to explore the impact of regular yogic practices on the mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of regular yogic practices on the mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students.

Hypothesis of the Study

- i. The level of mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students before yoga practice will be lower than after yoga practice, and
- ii. There will be a positive correlation between regular yoga practice and the mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students.

Method of the Study

A total of 39 BAMS 3rd-year students of the age group of 22 to 27 years were purposively selected as a sample from Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Kadamkuan, Patna (Bihar). A cross-sectional survey was conducted. The pre-test was done in August 2022 before the yoga practice, and the post-test was done 45 days after the yoga practice in September 2022 on the same respondents. Data were collected using the “Mental Health Battery (MHB)” constructed and standardized by Singh and Sengupta (2000). The scale consists of a total of 130 items with six groups (a-emotional stability, b-overall adjustment, c-autonomy, d-security and insecurity, e-self-concept, and f-intelligence). A low score on this scale indicates “poor mental health”, while a high score indicates “good mental health”. This scale has been found to be very appropriate, valid, and reliable to measure the level of mental health in the Indo-cultural context.

Result and Discussion

It was found that the level of mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery

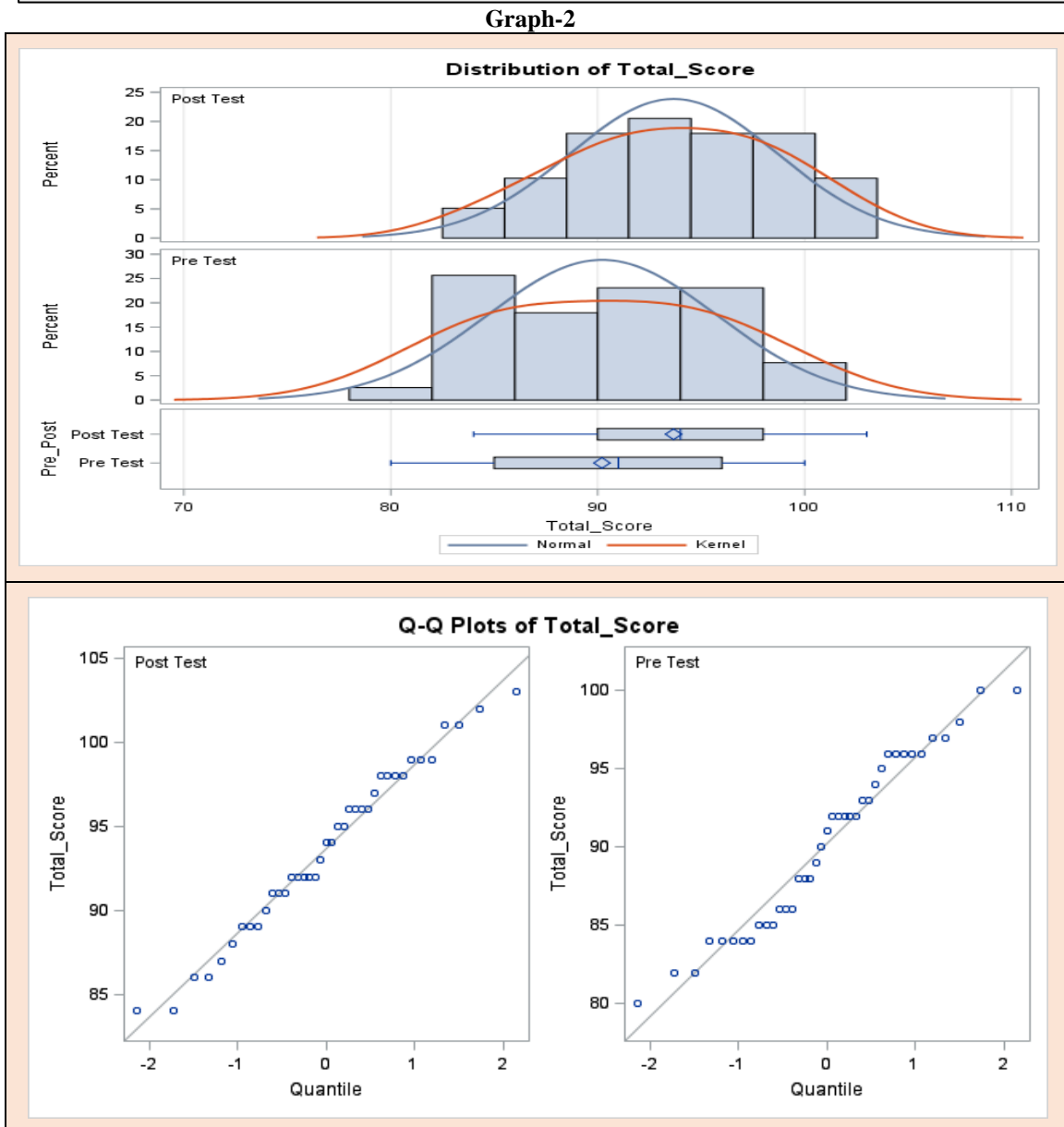
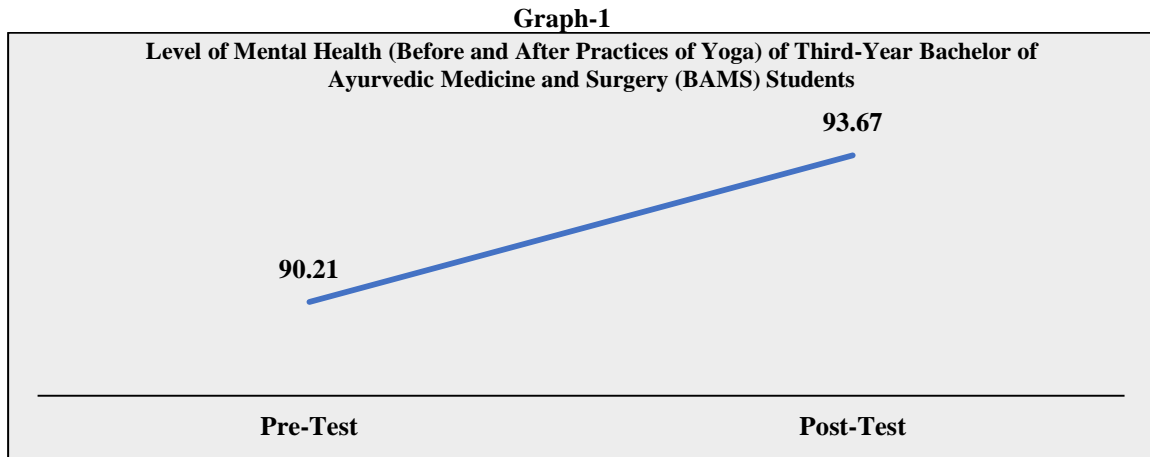
(BAMS) students before the yoga practices had the lowest mean score (90.21) compared to the after-yoga practices (mean: 93.67) at the level of mental health measure (Table-1). The obtained lower-upper 95% confidence limits for the mean (for pre-test: 88.41-91.99, and for post-test: 92.04-95.29) were found significant at <.05 level of confidence (p-value: 0.005). It means that there is a 95% chance that if we collect and analyse data again on the same respondent using the same scale, the mean score on the mental health scale will fall under this range. The minimum and maximum for the pre-test were found to be between 80 and 100; while for the post-test it was found between 84 to 103. If we look at table-1, it will be clear that the t-value is 2.89, while the p-value is 0.005.

If we compare the mean of both the pre-test and post-test, it is clear that the mean score of BAMS 3rd-year students before yoga practice is lower than that after yoga practice. It can be said that the level of mental health of BAMS 3rd year students before regular yoga practice was not better than after regular yoga practice. It means that the first hypothesis is accepted.

Table-1: Level of Mental Health (Before and After Practices of Yoga) of Third-Year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) Students

	N	Mean	SD	SD Err	Min	Max	Lower- Upper 95% CL for Mean	t-Value	p-value
Pre-Test	39	90.21	5.54	0.89	80	100	88.41-91.99	2.89	0.005*
Post-Test	39	93.67	5.02	0.80	84	103	92.04-95.29		

*Min=Minimum, Max=Maximum, CL=Confidence Interval, SD= Standard Deviation, *Significant at <.05 Level of Confidence*



Further, if we look at table-2, it will be clear that there is a positive

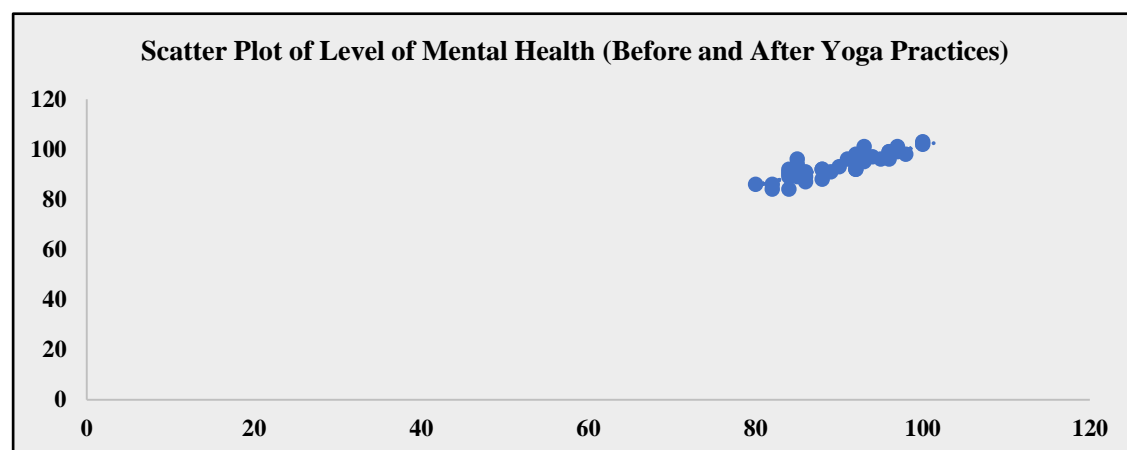
relationship between both the variables - pre-test and post-test. It's indicated

that regular yoga practice had a positive effect on the overall mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students. In other words, it can be said that as a person practices yoga regularly, his overall mental health will be good. Based on 39 observations, the correlation between “pre-test scores” and “post-test scores” was found to be 0.876. Both variables were statistically significant ($p < .01$), had a linear relationship, and the

direction of the relationship was positive. Its indicates that regular yoga practices are associated with the overall mental health of third-year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students. Thus, it can be said that there was a positive association between regular yoga practice and mental health of third year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students. It means that 2nd hypothesis is also accepted.

Table-2: Correlation between Pre-Test Score (Before Yoga Practices) and Post-Test Score (After Yoga Practices) of Overall Mental Health of Third-Year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) Students			
Correlation between Pre-Test Score (Before Yoga Practices) and Post-Test Score (After Yoga Practices) of overall Mental Health		Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
Pre-Test Score	Pearson Correlation	1	0.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.0001
	N	39	39
Post-Test Score	Pearson Correlation	0.876**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.0001	
	N	39	39
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Graph-3



Conclusions

To conclude it may be said that:

- The level of mental health of BAMS 3rd-year students before regular yoga practice was not

good as compared to after regular yoga practice, and

- There was a positive association between regular yoga practice and mental health

of third year Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students. It can be said that there is a positive relationship between

regular yoga practice and the mental health of BAMS 3rd-year students. Regular yoga practice can improve mental health.

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