

Benefits of Yoga for College Students - A Questionnaire Based Study

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Abstract: **Aim and Objective:** A Survey on awareness of yoga and it's benefits on health among college students. **Materials and Methods:** Questionnaires were circulated among college students and got about 100 responses to get information regarding their opinion on practicing yoga, their fears on practicing yoga and their awareness on its advantages and disadvantages. **Background:** Stress and anxiety have been found to be contributors to any chronic diseases. It decrease the quality of life, even with pharmacological treatments. Efforts are taken to find non pharmacological therapies to relieve stress and anxiety, and yoga is one option for which results are promising. **Results:** Most of the students were aware of benefits of yoga practice yet not ready to practice it regularly due to their busy schedule.

Keywords: yoga, practice, health benefits.

1. Introduction

Modern man has become a machine, working from the morning till sunset; almost all the sections of the population have become mechanical machines (1). Young adulthood is a period of major transition often accompanied by increased stress (10). College students experience very high levels of stress and often lack the time or resources to manage their stress effectively. Many alternative therapies have been studied for stress relief (14). The latest American College Health Association (ACHA, 2014) report indicated that approximately half of students reported more than average or tremendous stress within the last 12 months (10). Few programs have incorporated mind-body skills approaches such as yoga and meditation, which are known to be effective self-regulatory and stress management skill (11). Yoga is a holistic system of mind-body practices for mental and physical health involving multiple components such as physical postures and exercises to promote strength and flexibility, breathing exercises to enhance respiratory functioning, deep relaxation techniques to cultivate the ability to mentally and physiologically release tension and stress, and meditation/mindfulness practices to enhance mind-body awareness and improve attention and emotion regulation skills (9). Yoga as a general term that encompasses breathing techniques, postures, strengthening exercises and meditation (17). Although yoga has been practised for over 5000 years, it has only recently gained popularity in the United States and Europe. The practice originated in India and has been implemented to alleviate both physical and mental ailments, including bronchitis, chronic pain and symptoms of menopause (17). It is not unusual for yoga teachers and students to report that yoga has an uplifting effect on their moods, even when they are dysphoric. Congruent with these reports, a small body of research suggests that yogic techniques may help alleviate symptoms of depression. studies on non-depressed persons have found increased positive and decreased negative mood

following yoga practices. Other studies on non depressed persons have found increased positive and decreased negative mood following yoga practices (4). Yoga affects the lifestyles of many individuals ranging from child and teen to senior (3). This study is to analyse the awareness on yoga and its benefits among college students.

2. Materials and Methods

A questionnaire was prepared to create awareness about health benefits of yoga among student community. Questionnaires were circulated among college students and got about 100 responses. They gave information regarding their opinion on practising yoga, their fears on practicing yoga and their awareness on its advantages and disadvantages. After the questionnaire was completed, a basic idea about benefits of yoga was given. The questionnaire is given below

- 1) Do you think practising yoga is good for your health?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐
- 2) If yes, what style of yoga have you tried?
- 3) How often do you practice?
Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Never ☐ Other ☐
- 4) What is your reason or motivation for taking yoga?
- 5) Do you think practising yoga is good for your health?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐
- 6) Do you find any noticeable changes following yoga practice?
Yes ☐ No ☐
- 7) Would you recommend yoga practice to your friends?
Yes ☐ No ☐
- 8) Are you aware that yoga practice helps your body withstand strain, tension and fight against stress related pains?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐
- 9) Are you aware that yoga is applicable for psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia?

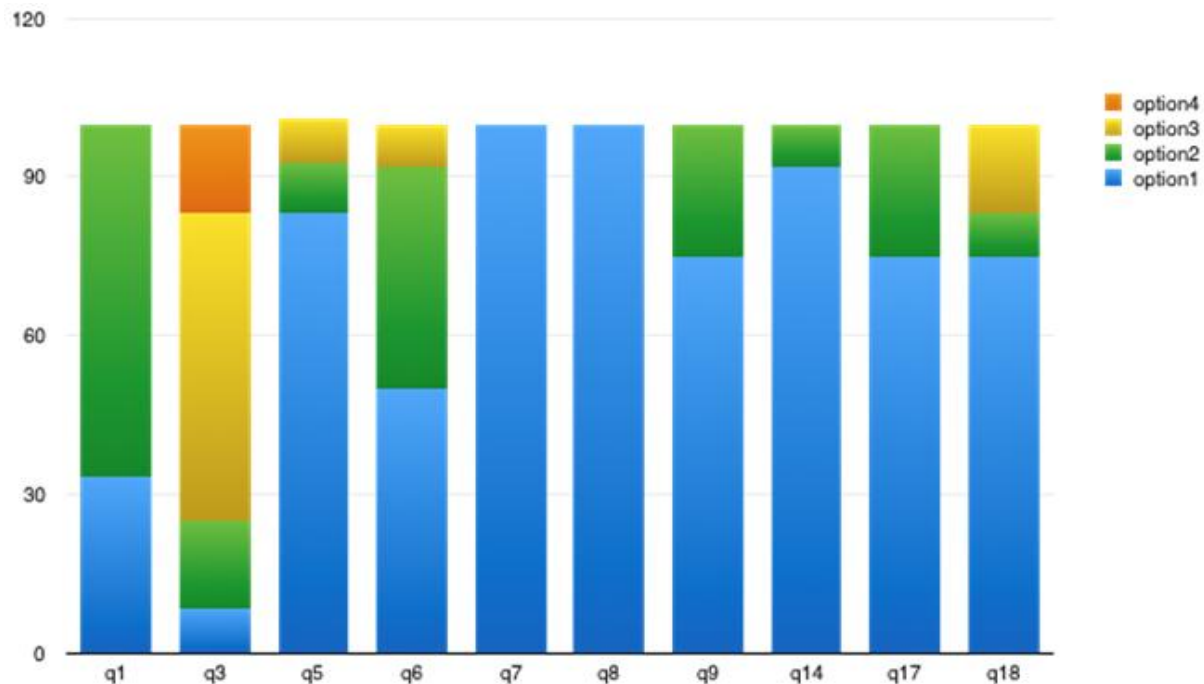
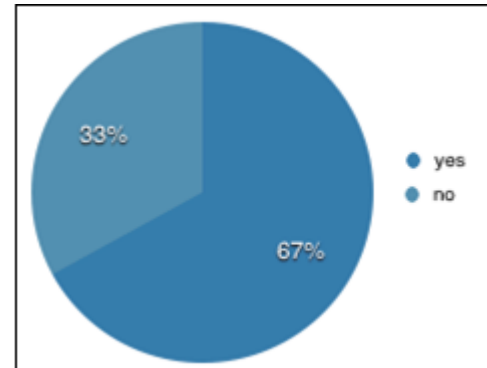
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

- 10) What were your previous experiences about yoga. Mention if any?
- 11) What form of yoga do you practice?
- 12) Which form of yoga do you prefer the most?
- 13) What according to you are the common initial fears amongst those who are new to yoga?
- 14) Do you associate yoga with scientific research?
Yes ☐ No ☐
- 15) What do you find most challenging in practicing yoga?
- 16) What has surprised you in practicing yoga?
- 17) Do you think your anger is controlled by practicing yoga?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐
- 18) Do you think yoga practice has increased your concentration in studies?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

3. Results

An overall response rate of 100% was achieved as all students responded properly. The diagrams below explain their awareness on benefits of yoga.

	Yes	No
Habit of practicing yoga regularly	67%	33%



4. Discussion

The benefits of a practice in yoga range from a small degree to a life changing level (3). Out of 100, 66.7% students have the habit of practicing yoga regularly. Most common reason for taking yoga practice is health concerns followed by fitness, refreshment, mind peace. 50% students found changes in health conditions after yoga. This practice has been implemented to alleviate both mental and physical ailments, including bronchitis, chronic pain and symptoms of menopause (17). 88.3% accept yoga practice is good for health and all students recommended yoga practice to their friends. Yoga practitioners often describe having more energy, vitality, and balanced emotions (3). Almost everyone is aware that yoga practice helps your body withstand strain, tension and fight against stress related pains. Yoga also benefits for disorders, ADD, ADHD, eating

habits, obesity, body image, addictions, depression, life satisfaction, and the quality of life (3). The most preferred form of yoga is yogilates and Zumba yoga. According to them the most common initial fears and most challenging aspects of yoga was pain, tiredness etc., The most surprising aspects was refreshments, weight loss etc., Majority of the students think yoga practice controls anger. Stress and anxiety have been found to be contributors to many chronic diseases. It decrease the quality of life, even with pharmacological treatments. Efforts are taken to find non pharmacological therapies to relieve stress and anxiety, and yoga is one option for which results are promising. 75% of the students say that yoga practice increase concentration in studies. Yoga's combination of breath and movement can help alleviate social and academic stress, clear the mind and soothe cramped bodies jammed into desks and hunched over computers (1).

5. Conclusion

Yoga and Meditation is a scientific discipline of removing or eradicating stress and tension at its source (1). Meditation and Yoga reduces the effects of stress among the students and induces a feeling of calm and peacefulness, combats depression and anxiety, counteracts helplessness and weakness, and thus increases self - esteem and internalised locus of control (5).

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