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Yoga and Weight Management

M.Kamraju^{1,*}, Mohd Akhter Ali², J Krishnaiah³

¹ ICSSR Major Project, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, India

² Department of Geography & Joint Director, Directorate of Admissions, Osmania University, India

³ Department of Education, University College of Education, Osmania University, India

*Correspondence: E-mail: kamraju65@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Yoga is an ancient practice that originated in India over 5,000 years ago. It combines physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation, and mindfulness practices to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. This research paper explores the impact of yoga on physical health, especially weight management. The paper provides an overview of the theoretical and practical foundations of yoga, the scientific evidence for its health benefits, and the challenges and limitations associated with its use.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga is a mind-body practice that involves physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation or relaxation (Kiecolt-Glaser *et al.*, 2010; Sharma & Haider, 2014; Kamraju, 2022). While yoga is not typically thought of as a weight loss program, it may be a useful tool for weight management (Hagins *et al.*, 2007; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). Several studies have found that regular yoga practice is associated with a lower body mass index (BMI) and a lower risk of obesity (Lauche *et al.*, 2016; Ali *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, yoga may help with weight management by increasing physical activity, promoting mindful eating, reducing stress, and improving digestion (Posadzki *et al.*, 2014; Ali *et al.*, 2017). However, it is important to note that yoga is unlikely to be effective as a standalone treatment for weight loss or management (Chong *et al.*, 2011; Sengupta, 2012; Chu *et al.*, 2016). A healthy diet and regular physical activity are also important components of weight management, and individuals who are considering using yoga for weight management should work with a qualified yoga instructor and healthcare provider to develop a safe and effective yoga program that meets their individual needs and goals (Tilbrook *et al.*, 2011; Ross & Thomas, 2010; Cohen, 2004; Moonaz *et al.*, 2017). This paper provides the effect of yoga on mass body managements.

2. METHODS

This study is a literature survey. We collected, reviewed, and summarized data obtained from articles in international journals and compared them to the current situation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several studies have investigated the relationship between yoga and weight management. Here are some key findings:

- (i) Reductions in body weight and body mass index (BMI): A study published in the International Journal of Yoga Therapy found that overweight and obese women who practiced yoga for 16 weeks experienced significant reductions in body weight, BMI, and waist circumference (Gothe *et al.*, 2016; Cramer *et al.*, 2016). Another study published in the International Journal of Yoga found that a 12-week yoga program resulted in significant reductions in BMI and body fat percentage in overweight and obese adults (Jayasinghe, 2016; Singh *et al.*, 2019).
- (ii) Improved eating behaviors: A study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics found that individuals who practiced yoga had a lower body mass index, consumed fewer calories, and had healthier eating behaviors than those who did not practice yoga (Kumar & Singh, 2016). Additionally, a study published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that a 12-week yoga program resulted in improved eating habits and reduced food cravings in overweight and obese women (Kolasinski *et al.*, 2016).
- (iii) Reduced stress and emotional eating: Chronic stress has been linked to increased appetite and weight gain (Cramer *et al.*, 2013). Several studies have found that yoga can help reduce stress and promote relaxation, which may help individuals manage their weight more effectively (Craft & Perna, 2004; Streeter *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, a study published in the Journal of Obesity found that a mindfulness-based intervention that included yoga reduced emotional eating and improved weight loss outcomes in obese individuals (Gupta *et al.*, 2006; Hofmann *et al.*, 2010;).

- (iv) Increased physical activity: Many forms of yoga involve physical postures (asanas) that require strength, flexibility, and balance (Kinser *et al.*, 2014; Tiedemann *et al.*, 2015). Regular practice of yoga may increase physical activity levels, which can help with weight management (Sharma *et al.*, 2014).

The findings suggest that yoga may be a useful tool for weight management. However, more research is needed to fully understand the relationship between yoga and weight management, including the optimal frequency and duration of practice, the types of yoga that are most effective, and the mechanisms by which yoga may affect weight management.

There are several possible mechanisms by which yoga may help with weight management:

- (i) Increased physical activity: Many forms of yoga involve physical postures (asanas) that require strength, flexibility, and balance. Regular practice of yoga may increase physical activity levels, which can help with weight management.
- (ii) Mindful eating: Mindful eating involves paying attention to the taste, smell, and texture of food, as well as hunger and fullness cues. Several studies have found that yoga can help promote mindful eating, which may lead to healthier eating habits and better weight management.
- (iii) Reduced stress and emotional eating: Chronic stress has been linked to increased appetite and weight gain. Several studies have found that yoga can help reduce stress and promote relaxation, which may help individuals manage their weight more effectively.
- (iv) Improved digestion: Certain yoga postures, such as twists and forward folds, may help stimulate digestion and improve bowel function. This may help with weight management by promoting regularity and preventing bloating and constipation.
- (v) Improved body awareness: Yoga can help individuals become more aware of their bodies, including their hunger and fullness cues. This may help individuals make healthier choices about food and prevent overeating.

It is important to note that while yoga can be a helpful tool for weight management, it is unlikely to be effective as a standalone treatment for weight loss or management. A healthy diet and regular physical activity are also important components of weight management, and individuals who are considering using yoga for weight management should work with a qualified yoga instructor and healthcare provider to develop a safe and effective yoga program that meets their individual needs and goals.

4. CONCLUSION

Yoga that has been used from more than 5,000 years has been used to enhance physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. It incorporates physical postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and mindfulness techniques. This study investigates yoga's effects on physical health, particularly weight control. The study gives a general summary of yoga's theoretical and practical underpinnings, the medical research supporting its health advantages, and the difficulties and restrictions related to its application.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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