



Yoga Practice as a Therapeutic Complement in Headache Management - Literature Review

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Introduction

Headaches are currently the sixth leading cause of disability worldwide, thus carrying a significant disease burden. Furthermore, this symptom is responsible for a large portion of healthcare consultations and is associated with a high socioeconomic impact, loss of work productivity, and reduced quality of life. In this scenario, the importance of a therapeutic approach is evident, one that is based on an integrated treatment strategy aimed at relieving pain, improving patient functionality, reducing the frequency of attacks, and preventing/limiting disease progression. One of these alternatives is the practice of Yoga, where the positive effects of this exercise have been noted in the non-pharmacological treatment of headache disorders. In Brazil, Yoga was incorporated into the Unified Health System (SUS) through Ordinance 719, enacted on April 7, 2011, which created the Health Academy Program. This was due to the benefits evidenced in various literature, considering Yoga as a useful tool for the health of the population, particularly in the care of individuals with headaches, heart diseases, stress, palliative care needs, among others.

Objective

This work aims to investigate the beneficial effects of Yoga practice on headache disorders.

Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review method, addressing the topic of the beneficial effects of Yoga practice on headache disorders, using the PubMed and Scielo databases. The evaluation parameters include English and Portuguese languages, with publication dates from 1991 to 2023.

Results

A comprehensive analysis of the data suggests that the practice of the well-being modality known as 'Yoga' may offer significant advantages in the treatment of headaches. The results indicate a statistically relevant decrease in the frequency, duration, and intensity of pain experienced by patients who participated in this practice, especially those dealing with tension-type headaches. However, it is important to note that no significant effects were observed in relation to patients suffering from migraines. It is essential to emphasize that, despite these promising findings, the results are based on a set of studies related to the references used. Additionally, the variability in the effectiveness of Yoga among different types of headaches highlights the complexity of treating this health condition.

Conclusion

Research suggests that regular Yoga practice can play a beneficial role in headache treatment, especially those associated with tension. There was a significant reduction in the frequency, duration, and intensity of pain in patients who adopted this therapeutic approach. However, statistically significant effects were not observed in patients with migraines. It is important to note that these results are based on a limited set of studies, limiting their general applicability. The variation in the effectiveness of Yoga among different types of headaches underscores the complexity of treating this condition, which, upon closer examination of the initial findings, suggests that Yoga practice may be beneficial for headache management, especially tension-related headaches.

Keywords: Headaches; Yoga; Quality of Life; Review Literature as Topic.