

SYTAR 2015**CIC Session #2: Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Health****Presentation: Michael de Manincor
(Sydney, Australia)**

TITLE: *Yoga for reducing depression and anxiety, and increasing wellbeing – deciding on approaches and techniques in research and therapeutic interventions.*

OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore questions, ideas, different points of view and evidence related to which aspects, approaches and components of yoga practice are effective in reducing depression and anxiety, and increasing well-being.
2. To explore ideas and questions related to decision making processes for development and design of yoga interventions for reducing depression and anxiety, in both research and therapeutic interventions.
3. Presentation and discussion of our own research findings which used the Delphi-method for development of consensus-based intervention guidelines for use in research, teaching and therapy.

DESCRIPTION

Yoga is a broad system that includes many approaches, practices and techniques. Growing evidence suggests that Yoga (or Yoga therapy) can be effective in reducing depression and anxiety. However, reviews of the research highlight the significant heterogeneity in interventions, approaches and techniques used. Does this suggest that anything called “yoga” might work? Current evidence of the effectiveness of particular approaches is insufficient for guiding decisions in the development of interventions. A more detailed understanding of effective components of yoga interventions is needed, as well as consideration of what to avoid. This session will explore details of interventions used in yoga for mental health research. Participants will be guided through decision-making processes for the design and development of effective interventions. Results from our own research for the development of consensus based intervention guidelines utilising the Delphi research method will also be provided.

INTEREST TO THE COMMUNITY

Researchers, teachers and therapists will have a better understanding of issues in the development of interventions for people with depression or anxiety. Evidence-based, practical methods for seeking the views of those with experience in the field.

Brief notes & key points:

FOCUS: "Yoga for reducing depression and anxiety, and improving wellbeing"

Has three related factors, goals, outcomes:

1. Reducing depression
2. Reducing anxiety
3. Improving well-being

- ➔ Are different approaches required?
- ➔ Are there general or common factors?

How do we make decisions about which approaches and techniques work best, in research interventions and therapeutic or class settings?

In a personal yoga practice or group class,

- What to include?
- What to avoid?
- How to decide?

Are our decisions based on

- Preferred style?
- Personal/Professional Experience?
- Intuition?
- Evidence?

These are complex questions, with considerations related to the multitude of different yoga techniques (cultivation of values, postures, breathing, relaxation, yoga nidra, mindfulness & meditation, mantras, visualisations), different approaches to each of these techniques, numerous different "styles" of modern yoga, as well as individual differences.

Many of us already believe that yoga can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and increase well-being, and there is a growing body of evidence to support these claims. However, given the diversity of different approaches and possibilities, researchers and teachers/therapists continue to ask questions about which components of yoga practice are the most effective, for different people.

- For some, this may raise questions about the value of scientific research and evidence-based approaches.

Given the diversity of approaches and lack of evidence for any particular approach, gaining the knowledge, wisdom and experience of yoga teachers who are experienced in the field of mental health may be valuable - at least until further evidence-based approaches are established. This may be described as establishing a "consensus view".

One approach to establishing a consensus view is known as the "Delphi method". Used in research as a starting point when little or no prior evidence exists. In this method, a panel of independent "experts" are guided through an anonymous process until agreement or consensus is reached.

This does NOT suggest that the consensus views are necessarily correct, but is often a useful starting point for further investigation.

We have conducted a study titled:

"Establishing key components of yoga interventions for reducing depression and anxiety, and improving well-being: a Delphi method study"

The study has been published and is available for download in the open access journal BioMedCentral - Complementary and Alternate Medicine
www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/15/85

It was NOT the objective of this presentation to provide answers, details or instructions about what to do or not do.

Rather, the objective was to open an ongoing process for reflection, discussion and further investigation, as researchers, yoga teachers or therapists.

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