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Is Yoga an Effective Treatment for Anxiety and Depression?

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Objectives: The primary objective of this scholarly project was to identify if yoga is an effective intervention for the treatment of anxiety and depression.

Background: Anxiety and depression are very common mental health disorders seen in the United States and worldwide. Currently western medicine focuses on treating these illnesses with pharmacotherapy and behavioral therapy. There are questions regarding the efficacy of pharmacotherapy and whether or not it is a good long-term treatment option. Yoga is a practice that focuses on breathing and physical exercises that originated in ancient India. Yoga is used for wellness in many parts of the world and there is a recent interest in incorporating yoga as a therapy in healthcare.

Methods: An integrative review of the literature was completed. Various online databases were searched using the search terms yoga, anxiety, depression and alternative therapies. Abstracts were reviewed and studies were chosen if their purpose aligned with that of this integrative review. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included. Data was extracted and analyzed on all of the studies included in this review.

Results: Twelve studies were selected and reviewed. The majority of the articles were quantitative studies, with one qualitative and one mixed-methods study. Overall, the studies indicated that yoga can benefit patients with anxiety and depression. Most studies showed decreased self-reporting of anxiety and depression symptoms with yoga practice.

Conclusions: Significant support exists for yoga as a treatment for anxiety and depression. However, there is a lack of standardization in yoga as a treatment for these illnesses and this requires further investigation.

Biography

Cori Bailey is a nurse from Woodstock, Connecticut. She graduated from Keene State College with her Bachelor of Science in nursing in 2015. She will graduate with her Master of Science in nursing from the Family Nurse Practitioner program in May of 2019. She has experience in medical-surgical and urgent-care nursing. She has also worked as a nurse-consultant for a childcare center. She is interested in incorporating alternative therapies into her future practice as a nurse practitioner.

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