HOW DOES YOGA PRACTICE IMPROVE TREATMENT RELATED SIDE-EFFECTS AND WELL-BEING IN CANCER PATIENTS POST TREATMENT?

Cheryl Fenner Brown, E-RYT 500, PYT,1,2 Dawn Jacobson, MD, MPH: E-RYT 500,3


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INTRODUCTION

Cancer and its allopathic treatment are often associated with a reduction in well-being across physical, functional, emotional, and spiritual domains. Yoga may improve well-being and is known to be beneficial for managing fatigue, insomnia, stress, and mood disturbances. The Healing Yoga for Cancer Survivorship (HYCS) standardized yoga protocol was designed to improve well-being for use with cancer survivors and includes:

HYCS Active Practices:
- Reclining Poses (asana)
- Seated Poses
- Kneeling Poses
- Standing Poses
- Restorative Poses

HYCS Contemplative Practices:
- Intention Setting (sankalpa)
- Chanting
- Hand Gestures (mudra)
- Breathing (pranayama)
- Body Scan
- Final Relaxation

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the impact of the standardized HYCS protocol on post-treatment side effects and overall well-being.
2. To evaluate which activities of the HYCS protocol are associated with changes in well-being: the physical practices (i.e., poses), or the contemplative practices (i.e., intention setting, chanting, mudra, pranayama, body scan, and final relaxation).
3. To determine whether a dose-response relationship exists through the use of a home practice booklet and DVD.

METHODS

- Yoga Intervention: HYCS protocol taught in 8-weekly 90-minute sessions by a professional yoga therapist, daily home practice with DVD and booklet encouraged.
- Measures: Yoga group reported daily on frequency of HYCS protocol use and on levels of physical, functional, emotional, and spiritual well-being using 31 factors from FACT-G and FACT-S5 measures.
- Intended Benefits of HYCS Protocol: To increase body awareness and lymphatic drainage; facilitate deep breathing; reduce anxiety, edema, and muscle tension.
- Control Group: Not analyzed due to small sample size (n=2)

RESULTS

FREQUENCY OF HYCS PRACTICE

INCREASE IN WELL-BEING SCORE BY DOMAIN

CONCLUSIONS

1. HYCS protocol positively affected 76% of well-being factors measured.
2. Evaluation showed more frequent use of contemplative yoga practices yielding a greater increase in emotional and spiritual well-being.
3. Dose-response relationship confirmed with greatest increase among emotional and spiritual domains:
   - Most Frequent Contemplative Practice: Setting Intention
   - Most Improved Emotional Well-being Factors: Worry about death - 24% improvement
   - Most Improved Spiritual Well-being Factor: Harmony - 26% improvement

REFERENCES