



# Yoga Therapy for the Adjunctive Treatment of Depression



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**Neil K. Agarwal, MD**

Medical Resident

Drexel University College of Medicine, Hahnemann University Hospital

Philadelphia, PA, USA

Email: [Neil.K.Agarwal@gmail.com](mailto:Neil.K.Agarwal@gmail.com)

**Shashi K. Agarwal, MD**

Medical Director

Center for Contemporary & Complimentary Cardiovascular Care

New Brunswick, NJ, USA

Email: [usacardiologist@gmail.com](mailto:usacardiologist@gmail.com)

## Introduction

Major depression is a common mental disorder. (Kessler et al, 2013) It carries the heaviest burden of disability amongst all mental and behavioral disorders. (WHO, 2010) Antidepressant therapy remains associated with non-efficacy, non-compliance, high rates of relapse and increasing cost issues. (Keller et al, 2000; Van et al, 2008; Santarsieri et al, 2015) Complementary treatment modalities have shown benefit for several mental and associated physical health symptoms, functioning, self-care, and overall quality of life. (Burnett-Zeigler et al, 2015; Kligler et al, 2016) Yoga has been investigated in several psychiatric conditions, (Cramer et al, 2017) including in the adjunctive management of depression. (Chu et al, 2017; Sayeed et al, 2010; Uebelacker et al, 2010; Bonura et al, 2014)

## Methods

A comprehensive search of PubMed under 'yoga and depression' revealed 488 citations dating back to 1974. PMC revealed 3436 full length articles. Other contemporary and complementary medicine databases were also queried and relevant publications were also consulted.

## Results

Yogic breathing improves emotions and reduces sadness in otherwise healthy young adults (Felver et al, 2015; Goldstein et al, 2016) and those with depression. (Falsafi, 2016) Yogic exercises has also been shown to alleviate depression in older individuals. (Bonura et al, 2014) In women with major depression, increased connectedness and decreased rumination was noted with yoga therapy. (Kinser et al, 2013) Addition of yoga to regular care further improves depression and anxiety in a variety of people. (de Manincor et al, 2016) Yoga therapy has shown to be salutary in depression associated with a wide variety of physical and mental conditions. (Telles et al, 2015; Gong et al, 2015; Rogers et al, 2015; Brinzo et al, 2016) Yoga therapy improved several psychological parameters including depression in inpatients in a rehabilitation and complex continuing care hospital. (Curtis et al, 2016) Salutatory effects along with psycho-education have been noted in patients with long term symptoms. (Butler et al, 2008)

## Conclusions

The majority of studies reviewed were short term but overwhelmingly conclude that yoga therapy is a safe and acceptable adjunctive intervention in the treatment of depression, with or without associated ailments and in a variety of people. It should therefore be routinely offered as a complementary therapeutic modality to these patients. More high-quality randomized clinical trials are needed to further define its long-term effects in patients with depression, irrespective of its cause.

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