GENERAL

Mindful Movement: Yoga as a Therapeutic Companion in Cancer Care

Neha*
* *Correspondence: Neha*

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Global Cancer Awareness Day

Global Cancer Awareness Day occurs annually on February 4th. This day annually recognizes the fight against cancer, one of humanity's worst foes. World Cancer Day brings together people, institutions, and communities worldwide to raise awareness, stimulate action, and promote a cancer-free future. However, Americans face a major health risk from cancer, which requires a more holistic approach than standard treatments. This blog will demonstrate how yoga may be a gentle but powerful booster for American cancer management. Yoga can help manage the cancer issue in the catalytic reaction of US healthcare, much as it helps diabetes neuropathy. Cancer patients require mental and emotional support, which can be significantly enhanced by incorporating yoga into their treatment regimen and reducing treatment-related adverse effects, according to research. Join the journey to understand yoga's role in cancer treatment.

Cancer: An Overview of Its Complexity

Uncontrolled cell growth, which results in cancer, is a serious health risk. Its causes are unknown; however, tobacco use and obesity can raise its risk. Unfortunately, more than 18 million cases of cancer were found in the US before 2023. This is only the number of cases. Thus, cancer is widespread. The 2023 forecast of new cancer cases is 1,898,160, which includes COVID-19-related cancer treatment delays. Cancer is anticipated to cause the deaths of 609,820 Americans in 2023, or 1,665 each day (Cancer Facts & Figures 2023). Cancer is lethal, despite decades of research and billions of dollars in funding. Although the cancer death rate has dropped 33% since 1991 and patient five-year survival rates have reached 69%, the challenges remaining are severe (Cancer Facts & Figures 2023). The figures alone demonstrate the need for cancer research, prevention, and treatment, as well as high-quality, accessible care.

Yoga: A Relaxing and Restorative Practice

Cancer therapies include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and hormone therapy. These treatments are all effective in eliminating, managing, or mitigating the symptoms and adverse effects of cancer. Regardless of the critical nature of each of these cancer remedies, an individual series of adverse effects is associated with each. Fatigue, pain, sleep disturbances, anxiety, and depression are some of the adverse side effects. These therapies may exhaust the body. Yoga may help reduce treatment-related side effects and contribute to the overall well-being of cancer patients.

Yoga therapy has also been found to improve the quality of life during and after cancer treatment. Yoga has its origins in the Vedic period in India, but it is not limited to India; individuals across the globe practice yoga. Yoga is a complete system for living, and today's generation should adopt it for their entire well-being. The survivors of cancer are not only troubled with physical but also mental, spiritual, and emotional effects. True yoga is not limited to physical yoga but is a part of your life. The proposal is to implement means where individuals take yoga beyond the mat. Today, yoga is perceived as an asana. But true yoga is?Bhathis, Kriyas, Pranayams, Meditation, Right Practices, Yoga Sequences, etc. Overall, yoga plays a tremendous role in maintaining health, particularly for cancer survivors.

Scientific Backing: Yoga and Cancer Research Insights

Yoga may not provide a cure for cancer; however, it can significantly alleviate the discomfort associated with treatment-related adverse effects. It minimizes post-cancer adverse treatment risks and promotes a sense of physical and mental well-being. The majority of cancer-related symptoms may include fatigue, pain, sleep difficulties, anxiety, depression, stress, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, a 2017 study found that yoga reversed fatigue in cancer patients, enhancing their vitality and quality of life. Ram P. Agarwal and Adi Maroko-Afek reviewed 138 yoga-in-cancer trials. By reviewing 10,660 studies from 20 countries. The review demonstrates yoga improves cancer patients' physical and psychological symptoms, quality of life, and immunological markers. Strong evidence supports yoga in traditional cancer care, despite minor methodological changes.

- **Reduce Pain:** Women with metastatic breast cancer (MBC) who practice yoga, primarily meditation, can anticipate a reduction in daily pain, according to a 2020 study by James W. Carson. This randomized controlled study showed that Mindful Yoga therapies (MYI) can reduce pain in advanced cancer patients, highlighting the need for personalized therapies.
- **Sleep Quality:** A 2013 study found that yoga therapies resulted in statistically significant increases in sleep quality and duration among breast cancer patients. Lin Yang et al. (2021) examined Tai Chi's medical benefits for cancer survivors in a systematic review. The evaluation found modest evidence that supervised Tai Chi (40?60 min, thrice weekly, 8?12 weeks) improved fatigue and sleep quality in 14 trials.
- **Improved Emotional Well-being:** Weimin Liu et al. examined how mindfulness yoga affects emotional well-being in early breast cancer patients receiving adjuvant chemotherapy. The study demonstrated that mindfulness yoga, when combined with standard care, lessens anxiety and depression and aids in increasing health-related quality of life, demonstrating a more comprehensive and supportive approach to cancer patients.
- **Other Improved Benefits:** Breast cancer survivors with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) overview revealed yoga may benefit from incorporating it into their treatment plan. This mind-body practice can help a woman manage her symptoms while also serving as a tool for physical fitness, body image, and lymphedema management.

Guidelines and Precautions for Safe Yoga Practice in the Context of Cancer

Cancer patients can safely engage in yoga so long as the practice is mindful and culturally sensitive. Understand when, how, and what to avoid in American health care when discomfort or risk occurs. Gentle allies are a key component of yoga. Each asana should be customized to the individual's cancer journey (mild to severe), form, and practice. Remember, safety precautions and guidelines keep yoga a beneficial and nurturing practice for cancer patients.

Additionally, yoga may help cancer patients, but it is not a cure. Instead, yoga should be regarded as an additional therapy to reduce treatment side effects and improve wellbeing. It does not substitute radiation, chemotherapy, or surgery. Cancer patients should work with medical professionals to create a comprehensive treatment plan that includes yoga and conventional medicine.

Embracing Yoga in Everyday Life for Cancer Management

Yoga serves as a holistic remedy to alleviate prevalent cancer symptoms in both men and women, in addition to nurturing a genuine inner connection. Yoga is more than just mats and religion. Yoga principles often have an unconscious impact on an individual's eating, sleeping, lifestyle, and thoughts. The practice of yoga, which promotes moment-by-moment awareness and mindfulness, enables participants to make more health-conscious dietary decisions. Dietary preferences, way of life, sleep patterns, and mindset are all impacted.

Concluding Thoughts on Yoga and Cancer

Yoga is an ancient complementary practice that aims to unite the mind, body, and spirit. It is a highly personalized practice and commitment incorporating breath awareness, relaxation techniques, exercise, and social support. Yoga encompasses all four of these primary methods for enhancing the quality of life of cancer patients. The approaches under consideration range from physical activity to relaxation. World Cancer Day is a call to action. Research-based evidence revealed cancer survivors who practice yoga could manage symptoms such as despair, pain, anxiety, insomnia, and exhaustion, which are common during and after conventional cancer therapies.

Note that yoga can help cancer patients, but it must be done cautiously. Some poses or motions may be unsafe for cancer patients. Cancer patients should consult medical professionals and practice with yoga instructors who have worked with cancer survivors. This will ensure the practice is safe and adapted to the survivor's requirements and limitations.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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