

**Online Yoga and the COVID-19 Pandemic:
Online Yoga's Effects on Mental, Physical, and Relationships
During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Submission to the School of Liberal Studies and Continuing Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Communications

Purchase College
State University of New York

December 2020

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Abstract

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected and sudden, starting in December 2019, and was declared a pandemic in March 2020. Due to the spread of the virus, many countries went into a lockdown, causing gym, dance, and yoga studios to be shut down temporarily. Online yoga was one strategy individuals used to help maintain physical and mental health.

Objective: The aim of this study is to examine the effects of online yoga during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding mental health, physical health and immune system, and relationships with others in isolation.

Design and Method: The research method is based on literature regarding COVID-19 effects on mental and physical health, as well as the contributions of taking online yoga. Studies and journal articles are reviewed and reported in the results section. The research questions are: *How has online yoga helped those who practiced with their mental health during isolation? Is there a significant difference in their physical health and immune system? Has online yoga during the pandemic improved relationships with others in isolation?*

Results: The significance of this study shows how online yoga was a helpful tool to help cope with stress, uncertainty and improve relationships. The research has also shown immunity benefits from practicing yoga, which is essential during COVID-19.

Conclusions: Having access to yoga online was and continues to be beneficial. Taking a holistic approach to health and practicing yoga can be worthwhile, especially with the anxieties and worry from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, online yoga, mental health, relationships, immune system

Chapter 1

Introduction

Yoga has been around for 5,000 years and had an aim to liberate suffering from this life (Williams, Steinberg, & Petronis, 2003). Although there were recognizable health and healing effects of yoga at the time, it was not as widely known as it is now. Yoga is known in the West as a holistic approach to health. The National Institutes of Health have classified yoga as a form of complementary and alternative medicine (Williams et al., 2003). The known potential benefits of yoga are increased flexibility and balance, advancement in fitness, and reduced stress.

In 2020 a global pandemic, COVID-19, hit. Much of the United States went into a lockdown. Exercise studios and gyms were particularly hard hit. This study will focus on yoga and its impacts on mental health during COVID-19. Yoga is one area in which people in a lockdown can participate using most forms of technology. During the pandemic, mental health was an area of concern for many people. Many individuals thought, how can I be in a lockdown and not lose my sense of purpose. One activity that may help ease mental health issues is online yoga.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected and sudden outbreak that remains unpredictable. COVID-19 has to lead to a significant increase in mental health problems due to unpredictability, uncertainty, and unforeseen lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has caused social isolation, loss of income, inactivity, limited access to essential services, increased access to food/alcohol, as well as decreased family and social support (Moreno et al., 2020).

Online yoga has become increasingly popular with the COVID-19 pandemic (XXX, year). There was a significant increase in yoga teachers and studios offering a wide range of online yoga classes. With yoga studios closing, it was important to find a way to continue the yoga practice while protecting the health of the teachers and their students.

I think that this is an important and relevant topic, as it is a global health threat that has affected millions of people and will continue into 2021. With the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in individuals being confined at home for months, an online yoga class could ease the stress, and pressure of not being able to attend face-to-face classes. Online yoga classes become increasingly popular as parks, beaches, sports, and other areas to exercise closed (Scharier, 2020). Yoga studios offer personalized sessions, as well as virtual one-to one or group sessions. People working from home or taking online classes were able to use a virtual or live class. There were some free classes or a reasonable membership for on-demand and livestream classes. Colleges offered yoga once a day on their websites for the students, staff, and faculty. Online yoga classes ranged from beginning to advanced, making it available to anyone.

People have been able to take care of themselves due to the extra time during isolation. With the increase of anxiety and depression, being able to take care of yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic can help not only mental stress, but boost immunity and overall health (Johnson, 2020). The aim of this research was to answer the following research question:

RQ1: *How has doing yoga online helped those who practiced with their mental health during isolation?*

RQ2: *Is there a significant difference in their physical health?*

RQ3: *Has online yoga improved relationships with others in isolation?*

Definitions

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2.

COVID-19 was caused by a new coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China, during December of 2019.

Yoga - A physical, mental, and spiritual practice that originated in ancient India. The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj, meaning “to yoke,” or “to unite.”

Anxiety- An emotion that is characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes.

Depression- A mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness. People with depression may lack interest and pleasure in daily activities, inability to concentrate, insomnia, lack of energy, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt, and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

pandemic- an outbreak of a disease over a country or the world.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

COVID-19 pandemic led to a worldwide health crisis, causing several mental health issues for millions of people. During the months of lockdown and being confined at home, individuals have experienced mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and isolation. The pandemic has brought about uncertainty and anxiety. Gyms and yoga studios were shut down for several months, under the lockdown was lifted in stages. Reopening happened in states, but individuals may consider attending risky with unknown consequences. Online yoga was one way to cope with the pandemic. Therefore, the research questions are:

RQ1: How has doing yoga online helped those who practiced with their mental health during isolation?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference in their physical health and immune system?

RQ3: Has online yoga improved relationships with others during isolation?

Yoga emerged thousands of years ago in India. In popular practice, yoga is generally used as a use of physical exercise. Yoga is known in the West as a holistic approach to health. The word yoga derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuk', meaning 'to join' or 'to yoke' (Basavaraddi 2015). Yoga focuses on bringing harmony between the body and the mind. The known potential benefits of yoga are increased flexibility and balance, advancement in fitness, and reduced stress.

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in late 2019. COVID-19 is an infectious and communicable disease that has become a huge public health challenge in the world. Starting in March 2020, there were curfews, quarantines, and similar restrictions due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. By April 2020, nearly half of the world was in a lockdown (Sandford 2020).

Yoga and Immune Response

Covid-19 has individuals with preexisting illnesses, such as heart disease, cerebrovascular diseases, diabetes, and the elderly more at risk. Many individuals are experiencing increased anxiety levels. In, *A Perspective on Yoga as a Preventive Strategy for Coronavirus Disease* (2019), the authors demonstrate how yoga can help with stress management and the prevention of illness. Yoga and meditation involve deep breathing and relaxation, significantly decreasing sympathetic nervous system activity and increasing baroreflex, stretch sensitive mechanoreceptors, for hypertensive patients. (Majumdar, et. al.(2020). The decrease in the nervous system activity and increase baroreflex can help reduce blood pressure values and anti-inflammatory aspects of COVID-19. It also helps improve the respiratory system's strength, which can be beneficial for any age group, even for the elderly that are at risk. The study conducted by Majumdar et al., (2020) includes a pilot study about yoga and COVID-19. The authors taught an eight-stepped yoga breathing procedure during 110 episodes of an acute airway obstructed in 86 patients with bronchial asthma. There was a significant improvement in anxiety and feelings of panic within the patient population studied. The findings showed that yoga could be beneficial for the immune system, compromised by COVID-19.

During psychosocial stressors, including isolation and uncertainty, the immune system can be severely compromised. Although yoga is known for relieving anxiety and stress and improving flexibility and muscle strength, some studies show the advantages of practicing yoga to maintain the immune system and health. Yoga can be one strategy that may help individuals to cope with the isolation during the pandemic.

In, *Meditation and Yoga Practices as Potential Adjunctive Treatment of SARS-CoV-2 Infection and COVID-19: A Brief Overview of Key Subjects*, the authors discuss how yoga practice

can provide significant beneficial effects on preventing illness. This study documented how yoga asana, meditation, and pranayama practice can be useful in treating and preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection, as well as COVID-19. This study also discusses the anti-inflammatory effects associated with meditation and yoga practices

There is a gap in the literature regarding research about the response to preventing COVID-19. Bushell et al., (2020) study demonstrates that particular meditation and yoga practices can bring benefits, such as increased melatonin to help mood, emotion, mental state, and functioning. Melatonin has also been demonstrated to possess significant health-promoting properties. The antiviral property may have an effect on respiratory diseases (Bushell et al., 2020). Melatonin is known for being the most beneficial natural substances known, which has the capacity to reduce infections. Bushell et al., (2020) conclude that there are potential short-term and long-term benefits that focus on yoga practices and the possible reduction of inflammatory and psychosocial stress factors.

According to the article, *Effect of Integrated Yoga Practices on Immune Responses in Examination Stress – A Preliminary Study*, Bhattacharjee et al., (2011) studied how stress can be associated with upper respiratory tract infections and immune response dysfunction. It is even more important now to combat stress as much as possible to save our immune system from COVID-19. This specific study evaluated the impact of stress on psychological, physiological parameters, and the immune system during the medical term. Sixty first-year female MBBS students were randomly selected to participate in a yoga group. The group was divided equally into an experimental and controlled group. The participants were assessed twice during the study, the first time of enrollment, and three months after. Thirty students in the experimental yoga group were asked to do 35 minutes of yoga daily with a yoga teacher for 12 weeks, while the control

group followed their normal daily routine with no yoga techniques. Bhattacharjee et al., (2011) conclusions will be presented in Chapter 4 of this study.

Mental Health Improved by Yoga

By making small choices, like doing online yoga classes, making significant changes will improve one's mental state. In, *Frequency of Yoga Practice Predicts Health: Results of a National Survey of Yoga Practitioners*; the authors study the relationship between yoga practice and one's well-being, including mental health and physical health. Improving health behaviors and participating in yoga can change someone's state of mind. In this study, the authors examine yoga practice and its relationship to health, including physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, sleep disturbance, fatigue, social support, mindfulness, and subjective well-being. The researchers for this study worked with the Iyengar Yoga National Association to select participants. The participants were 18-years-old who practiced yoga. Data was collected from the 1045 individuals who responded to the survey from June to September of 2011. "For every extra day per week of yoga home practice, mindfulness scores increased .42 of a point" (Ross, Friedmann, Bevans, & Thomas, 2012, p.4). The amount of time these participants practiced yoga was not significant, as it mattered more for how often they practiced. The effect of fatigue was significantly decreased, especially with participants older in age. Because breath work and meditation appeared to influence mindfulness and well-being, it may be particularly useful in treating depression and anxiety conditions. Ross et al. (2012). Having more gentle poses in yoga was associated with healthier food choices, including higher fruit and vegetable consumption, less alcohol, and more vegetarian diets. Ross et al. (2012) concluded that having at-home practice for yoga is extremely important, no matter the number of yoga individuals did in the past. Individuals who add healthy behaviors into their life will reap the health benefit. This specific study is

not directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic, although it has similar aspects that correlate with it.

Yoga and Relationships During Covid-19

Whether it be with family, friends, or romantic partnerships, relationships may be affected negatively due to the stress and anxiety caused during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Researchers have examined how external stresses in life can affect relationships. Unemployment, economic issues, and work stressors can affect the connection and quality of couples' interactions and perceptions of the relationship. In, *Applying Relationship Science to Evaluate How The COVID-19 Pandemic May Impact Couples' Relationships*, the authors look at how these uncertain times can negatively impact relationships. Coping with external stressors requires control and effort, which puts more of a demand on a relationship. The individuals may have difficulty engaging in the relationship (Pietromonaco & Overall, 2020).

Online yoga has been shown to improve and enhance relationships significantly. Yoga may be vital during an unprecedented pandemic and lockdown. Social isolation can be extremely detrimental to one's health, including negative cardiovascular outcomes, increased inflammation, and impaired immune system. Having close connections and relationships with people can improve an individual's mental state while improving health in general. In, *I Am a Nice Person When I Do Yoga!!!*, the Ross et al., (2013) demonstrate how yoga practice leads to personal transformation, increased social interaction, and coping mechanisms for relationship difficulties. Ross et al., (2013) This study helped to develop a better understanding of yoga practice and how it affects an individual's interpersonal relationships. In the Ross et al., (2013) study, participants were asked how much they agreed that yoga improved health aspects. The findings concluded

and provided support as a strategy to help with social support, populations at risk for social isolation, and individuals going through life transitions. The Ross et al., (2013) study is not correlated specifically to COVID-19; however, several factors can be associated with isolation during a pandemic. Ross et al., (2013) show how beneficial yoga is for one's mental state.

The literature reviewed documented yoga's benefits to an individual's mental, physical, and immune health. Having a severe amount of stress and anxiety can threaten the immune system, whether it be due to isolation, lack of routine, finances, or all of the above. Lockdown confinement can take a toll on relationships due to either being isolated with certain people for too long or due to a loss of connection. At this time, there is no vaccine available to ward off COVID-19, so it is vital to seek options that are readily available to cope. Online yoga is a convenient way to cope with the circumstances surrounding a pandemic lockdown. The pandemic has brought about uncertainty to our lives. This study will demonstrate the usefulness and positive gains from participating in online yoga during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 3

Methods

The design of this study is qualitative. Studies on yoga's benefits have been studied for years, but this specific method will focus on online yoga during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research focuses on three areas regarding COVID-19 and online yoga: mental health benefits, physical improvements, and interaction with others. My study investigated how online yoga classes affected individuals' lives during COVID-19 pandemic. This literature collected was concentrated from 2019 to 2020. Additionally, research journals were used from the early 2000s. The research was gathered from the Purchase College Library using the online databases including *International Journal of Yoga*, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management*, *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, and *Journal of Holistic Nursing*.

The research questions explored for the study were:

RQ1: *How has doing yoga online helped those who practiced with their mental health during isolation?*

RQ 2: *Is there a significant difference in their physical health?*

RQ3: *Has online yoga improved relationships with others in isolation?*

I decided to do qualitative research and a systematic literature search for this study because it involves the behaviors, experiences, and opinions of individuals in a society. The choice to collect data through a systematic literature search was helpful for this specific study to gather information during a global pandemic. By gathering a systematic literature review, I was able to gather relevant information relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby having applicable information to address my research questions. The literature reviews I found helped demonstrate the benefits of yoga on individuals in the past and how it applies during the current pandemic.

Specific key terms were used to search for academic studies and journals. These search terms included: *benefits of yoga, yoga and covid-19, online yoga versus in person, yoga and relationships, mental health, and yoga, covid-19 effects, physical health and yoga, and immune system and yoga.*

The study of online yoga's impact during COVID-19 was chosen because the unprecedented pandemic spread has caused lockdowns, thus isolating individuals at home. Exploring the different aspects of online yoga and how it can strongly influence and benefit ones' mental state, physical health, and relationships with others can bring light to an option that people may not think of during a pandemic. Yoga has been around for 5000 years to train the mind to become aware of one's nature. Over time, yoga has significantly transformed into a modern and common form of exercise and relaxation. There was an increase in online yoga participation in 2020 because most studios were closed due to the pandemic. Noticing the impact of having online yoga readily available can shed light on an option during uncertain times.

Since COVID-19 is unprecedented, documentation about online yoga and its impact is sparse. COVID-19 began spreading less than a year ago; therefore, making it particularly difficult to find a mass amount of research available. There is a great deal of information based on yoga and the benefits, but not explicitly related to COVID-19. The lack of research has created a gap in the available research.

Due to COVID-19 still being current, I had limitations on my study. Since I have a time limit on my research, it is not possible to see all of the possible results from online yoga during this pandemic. There were few studies focused on online yoga during this time.

There is also bias to note with online yoga. Some of the risks of doing yoga are injuries, osteoporosis, overdoing yoga, and untrained instructors (Johnson 2020). Although yoga can benefit good health and vitality, certain poses, and movements, including extending the neck, can have a greater risk of injury (Johnson 2020). Since yoga during COVID-19 was online, there is no professional in-person, making it easier for injuries to occur. There is also the possibility of overdoing specific exercises, which includes yoga practices. Overdoing yoga can possibly aggravate past injuries, leading to a slower recovery.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of my study based on the information gathered. The research questions will be answered with the data collected.

Chapter 4

Results

RQ 1: How has doing yoga online helped those who practiced with their mental health during isolation?

The stressors of COVID-19 pandemic, including isolation, job insecurity, and uncertainty, have caused a toll on individuals' mental health. Stress can lead to the immune system weakening, which is even more serious during COVID-19 pandemic. Gopal, Mondal, Gandhi, Arora, and Bhattacharjee's 2011 study was done in order to examine the impact of stress and immune system during medical term academic examination and the effect of yoga practices on the same (Gopal et al., 2011). Yoga has been shown to have effects on most physiological systems of the body (Gopal et al., 2011). Gopal et al., (2011) study participants were MBBS students (Bachelor of Medicine students) with no chronic physical illnesses and ages 17 to 20 years old. These students were randomly assigned to a yoga group and a control group. The students in the yoga group completed yoga practices for 35 minutes a day for 12 weeks, while the control group followed their normal routine with no yoga.

The results of this study conducted that the control group students (not practicing yoga) had a 5.98% increase in heart rate, a significant increase in systolic blood pressure ($P < 0.05$), increase in diastolic blood pressure by 1.67% (though not significant), an increase in rate pressure product ($P < 0.001$), increase in respiratory rate ($P < 0.05$) during examination stress. (Gopal et al., 2011). The feeling of stress and anxiety was decreased with the use of yoga.

Jasti, Bhargav, George, Varambally, and Gandahar (2020) studied the use of online yoga due to the immense psychological distress that people were facing. The primary aim of this tele-

yoga module was to reduce stress and enhance well-being, and it was offered to the general public as a free service from 1st to 30th April 2020 (Jasti et al., 2020). The Jasti et. al. (2020) study had 95 participants and included online yoga sessions twice a day, five days a week for four weeks. The assessments were done by using a 10-item perceived stress scale, yoga performance assessment scale, and visual analogue scales. The module's usefulness in reducing stress and enhancing well-being, participants rated it as 9.11 out of 1–10 (1 being the least and 10 being the best). After four weeks of practice, the following was also noted: mental relaxation and calmness (36 %); feeling energetic and less tired (23 %); feeling refreshed (18 %); and ability to concentrate (14 %) (Jasti et al., 2020). Jasti et al. (2020) suggest that online yoga can be useful for improving ones' well-being and decreasing their stress. The importance of switching from a traditional face-to-face delivery of yoga classes to a tele-yoga format cannot be over emphasized in times of COVID – 19, which seems set to change the world and the way people live forever. The psychological effects of this pandemic can last a significant amount of time. (Jasti et al., 2020).

Malik and Sharma's 2020 study utilizes online-based yoga intervention. Malik and Sharma requested 126 participants across India to practice yoga with an Indian Guru by the name of Baba Ramdev virtually. Participants performed yoga for thirty days with no break and were asked to record their blood pressure. The yoga involved in Malik and Sharma's study involved deep relaxation in order to reduce tension and stress.

The results of their study conclude that about 95% of the participants reported that their stress level had decreased during the 30 days of tele-yoga. Regarding energy level, about 92.06% of the participants reported that they had more energy. Having a regular sleep schedule can affect not only stress and energy levels, but immune system as well. About 96.83% of the participants

reported that their sleep was improved (Malik & Sharmas, 2020). Below is the chart used to gather results.

Figure 2; Measurement of Change in Stress Levels, Energy level, and sleeping duration

S.NO	VARIABLES	INCREASED		DECREASED		NEUTRAL	
		N	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
1	Stress Level	1	0.79	120	95.24	5	3.97
2	Energy Level	116	92.06	1	0.79	9	7.14
3	Sleeping duration	122	96.83	0	0	4	3.17

(Malik & Sharmas, 2020)

RQ 2: *Is there a significant different for their physical health and immune?*

With the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, it can take a toll on the body’s immune system. There is a crucial need to find the preventatives and cure to COVID-19, and while there is no vaccine yet, yoga was seen as a possible option. In Bushell et al., 2020’s study, the authors propose that there may be helpful secondary options to reduce the severity and/or prevent COVID-19 by looking at different literature to support their thesis. Despite being speculative for the present situation, there is a body of literature relevant to the anti-stress and anti-inflammatory effects of certain seated meditation, yoga asanas, and pranayama practices (Bushell et al., 2020). Melatonin could be potentially beneficial for COVID-19 prevention. Melatonin has also been demonstrated to possess antiviral properties related to certain to respiratory diseases. (Bushell et al., 2020). Melatonin has anti-inflammatory effects which could be beneficial in preventing COVID-19. Studies show that regular practice of yoga is associated with elevations in melatonin. (Bushell et al., 2020). That being said, there is not enough research on melatonin to prove that it could benefit the changes of COVID-19.

Individuals with preexisting conditions of diabetes, heart disease, cerebrovascular diseases and elderly are at a high risk.(Nagaethna, Nagendra, & Majumdar 2020). Based on several facts gathered from Nagaethna et al., (2020) there are some studies that there are add-on benefits of yoga in stress management, therefore helping prevent and manage COVID-19 and other non-communicable diseases. COVID-19 is respiratory, which is what this study is based on. In Nagaethna et al.'s study, they taught an eight-stepped yoga breathing procedure of neck muscle relaxation movement and breathing exercises. These movements were used during 110 episodes of acute airway obstruction in 86 bronchial asthma patients (Nagaethna et. al, 2020). There was a 20% improvement in the participants air flow during 30 minutes of the practice and a reduction in panic and anxiety. There was also a decrease in aggravating bronchial obstruction (Nagaethna et., all 2020). Nagaethna et., all 2020 also concluded a pilot study proving a 4-minute video of simple yoga movements to help patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Milano, Italy. A cardiac surgeon that was admitted in the intensive care unit in Italy with severe COVID-19 stated, "We have reached scientific evidence that this simplified protocol sent by you is effective and we intend to disseminate to the overall Scientific Community" (Nagaethna et. al., 2020, p.12). There is no cure for COVID-19, but online yoga could be a beneficial preventative and tool to use while waiting for a vaccine.

RQ 3: *Has online yoga improved relationships with others in isolation?*

Ross, et al., 2013 study had four themes identified in their findings. Yoga practice leads to personal transformation, increases social interaction, provides coping mechanisms to weather relationship losses and difficulties, and leads to spiritual transcendence. The two themes I will be focusing on are Personal transformation, Copying mechanisms to relationship difficulties and

losses (Ross et al., 2013). Social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic can be linked to adverse health consequences. (Ross, et al., 2013). Ross et al.'s 2013 study examined yoga practice patterns and aspects of health for yoga practitioners. Researchers worked with the Iyengar Yoga National Associations to identify 15 different yoga studios and approximately 4,300 individuals were randomly selected. A final sample of 1045 was achieved. Their survey asked the participants if they agreed or disagreed that yoga improved their health. Participants agreed that yoga improved happiness (86.5%), energy (84.5%), sleep (68.5%), social relationships (67%), and body weight (57.3%) (Ross, et al., 2013). The following question "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: My relationships are better because of yoga" was used.

The first theme, Yoga leads to personal transformation, participants had changed or become "a new person" after starting the practice of yoga; they had more positive traits; and they had fewer negative traits, all of which made their interpersonal relationships better. (Ross et al., 2013). The participants felt yoga practiced helped them significantly with themselves, making them more self-aware, insightful, and compassionate towards other people in their lives. An ongoing theme with the results of the participants were "I am stronger, calmer, and in less pain so that improves my relationships," and "I am a nice person when I do yoga!!!" (Ross et al., 2013). Many of the you practitioners had one or more of the following traits from yoga, which were: insight, self-awareness, mindfulness, calmness, peacefulness, happiness, compassion, kindness, tolerance, respect, and compassion (Ross et al., 2013). They also had a decrease in negative traits. These traits included being: intolerant, judgmental, and reactive (Ross et.al, 2013).

Another theme was yoga providing coping mechanisms to relationship difficulties and losses. COVID-19 led to an increase in depression and anxiety, taking a toll of relationships. It

also led to losses for loved ones due to the virus. An important result that is prevalent to COVID-19 is a practitioner that stated, my husband died and I have recently moved so my answers about my state of mind reflect that. I do know that yoga is the thing that keeps me feeling as good as I do. Without it I would be sad all of the time.” (Ross et al., 2013). Several practitioners commented on how yoga provided tools for dealing with difficult relationships. Stated one practitioner, “Yoga seems to remove the chaos from relationships so that you can better enjoy people” (Ross et al., 2013 p.73).

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the use of online yoga during the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects yoga has on individuals in isolation. The global spread of COVID-19 has caused heightened anxiety and other mental disorders, which can lead to impaired function, interpersonal conflicts, as well as a weakened immune system. It is even more critical now to combat stress as much as possible to save our immune system from COVID-19.

With uncertainty and no vaccine as of 2020, looking at an alternative for physical and psychological health is crucial. The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most significant challenges humankind has seen with restrictive lockdowns and unpredictable changes. Most individuals have had their daily life dramatically shifted during the months of the COVID-19 pandemic. With gyms and studios being temporarily closed, some even shut down for good due to no revenue, having a resource to help your mental health and physical health was crucial. Coping with external stressors in life takes a lot of effort, which puts more demand on mental stability and relationships.

There are questions about how long the mental health effects will last from the COVID-19 pandemic. Symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorder increased significantly in the United States from April through June of 2020, compared to the same period in 2019 (Czeisler et al., 2020). Yoga has shown that Individuals who add healthy behaviors into their life will reap the health benefit.

So, What?-Future Research

Yoga has been used for centuries for its health-promoting benefits. COVID-19 caused the severe acute respiratory syndrome. Additional research about how yoga can help with physical

health is vital. Although there is a great extent of research on physical benefits, such as increased flexibility, balance, and muscle strength, there are fewer investigations about how yoga can help the immune system regarding COVID-19. Since the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, a study about how yoga has value for mental health and possibly decreasing the risk of respiratory infections.

More studies should be conducted to understand yoga's role in helping with conditions, such as depression and anxiety, during a pandemic lockdown. Taking a holistic approach to health can be worthwhile, especially with the anxieties and worry from the COVID-19 pandemic. There are dozens of online yoga classes readily available on the Internet, some being free, making it incredibly easier to have yoga's incredible benefits. Yoga may be a simple and useful home-based practice to achieve and continue a healthy lifestyle during a pandemic.

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