

The Impact of Yoga on Mental Health: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Objective: Review yoga as a therapeutic option as it is easily adaptable to one's skills and can be done in various settings; in addition, many organizations provide accessible yoga classes. **Methods:** Databases searched included PubMed, Academic Search Premier, CINAHL, PsychINFO, and SCOPUS. Selected outcomes were levels of depression and secondary outcomes included QoL, stress, and anxiety. **Results:** Nine randomized controlled trials (RCTs) with 479 participants were included. Four RCTs had a low risk of bias. **Conclusion:** Yoga is a viable alternative holistic treatment for patients with depressive disorder.

Background

Modern yoga is a mind-body practice that originated in India and that Western allied health professions have adopted to support therapeutic outcomes (Michelis, 2008). Mind-body interventions include physical and meditative movement to improve aspects of mental health such as depression, anxiety, and quality of life (Weber et al., 2020). The number of individuals who practice yoga within the U.S. has increased in recent years; therefore, there is need to understand the clinical effects of yoga on mental health and quality of life (QoL; Schröter & Cramer, 2021)

Methods

Using five databases, articles between the years 2011– 2022 were searched. Search terms included: (“depression” OR “dysthymia”) AND “yog*” AND “quality of life.” To narrow our search, included articles had to meet the following criteria: written in English; included adult participants aged 18-65 years who showed mental health symptoms prior to intervention; published in peer-reviewed journals, matched outcomes wanted for this review; and used an RCT design.

Results

Table 1

Table 2

The final review contained nine randomized control trials exploring yoga's benefits on mental health and QoL. After extensive research, three themes based on the application and outcome of the interventions were identified throughout the nine articles: (1) Yoga and continued care, (2) yoga among community dwellers, and (3) yoga classes and home-based interventions.

Results

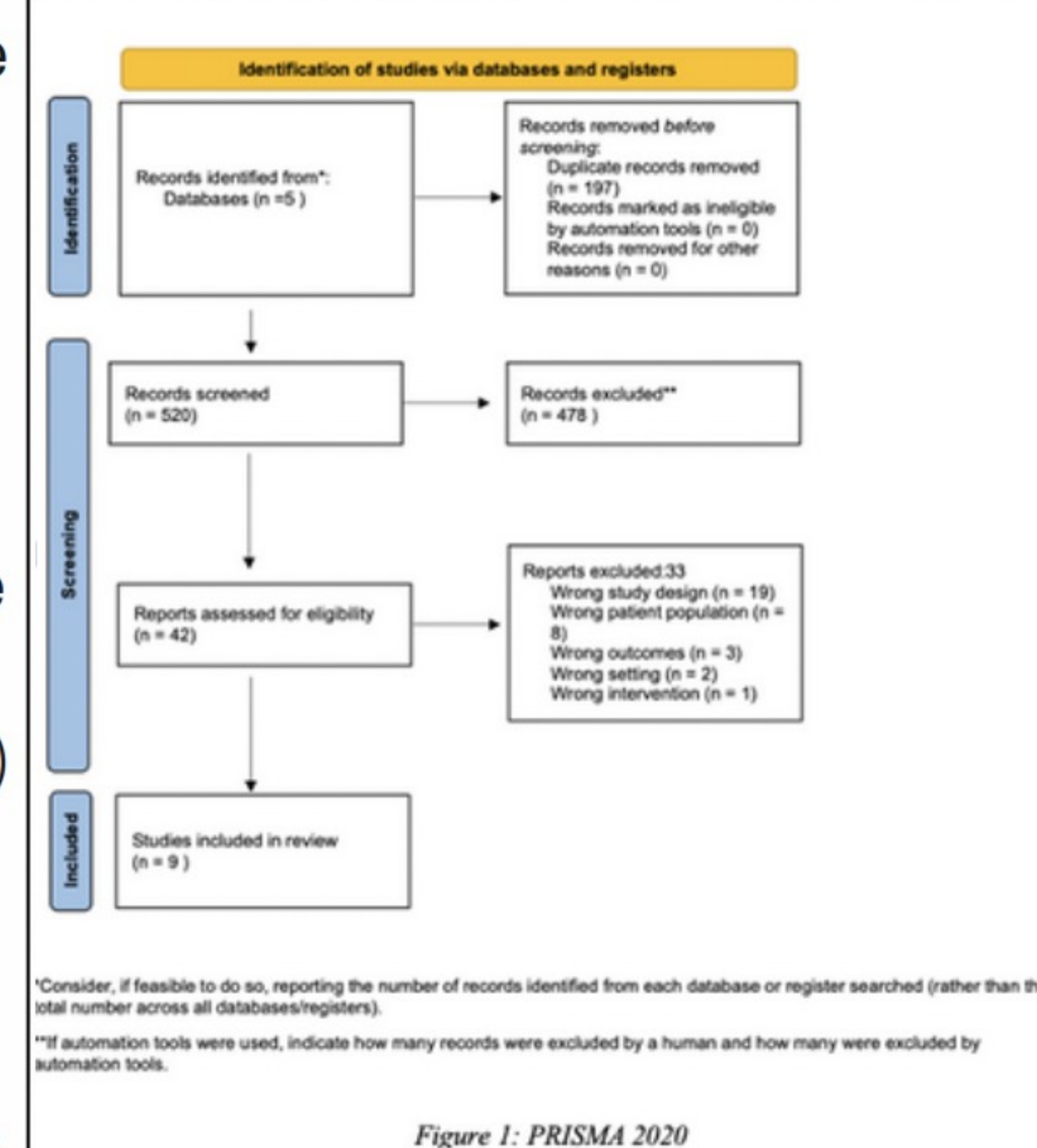


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020

Figure 1

Conclusions

With the results described in mind, more research should be conducted to determine the precise duration, timeline, and intensity of yoga interventions to promote mental health. Additionally, researchers should explore accessibility options for clients in the home health setting. In the future, occupational therapy practitioners should add yoga-based interventions into treatment sessions to promote mental health by decreasing depression, stress, or anxiety in the adult population. Occupational therapy practitioners should use evidence-based studies when creating and implementing yoga interventions for their clients.

References:

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