Research in the Spotlight

GUARDIAN
exercise rehabilitation

Changes in pain self-efficacy, coping skills and fear avoidance beliefs in a randomized controlled trial of yoga, physical therapy, and education for chronic low back pain.

The Objective:

The purpose of this research was to determine if yoga or generalised exercise-based therapy can improve the cognitive appraisal of pain compared to a standalone educational intervention, for those experiencing chronic low back pain.

What We Did:

320 low-income adults with chronic low back pain were randomised in to three intervention groups over a total of 12 weeks:

1. 12 weeks of yoga, including weekly sessions of 75 minutes in duration
2. One-on-one session (15 visits) with a physiotherapist to engage in a graded exercise program
3. A handbook which outlined education on back pain

Pain self-efficacy, pain coping strategies, and fear-avoidance beliefs were assessed.

What We Found:

- Pain self-efficacy improved in all 3 groups at 12 weeks
- Pain coping strategies improved for the yoga and graded exercise program groups at 12 weeks
- Fear-avoidance beliefs did not change between or within groups at 12 weeks

Clinical Implications:

The results of this study supports the notion that any intervention from group-based classes that promote physical activity/movement and mindfulness (yoga) to one-on-one graded exercise sessions, or even the provision of an educational book on back pain, has the capacity to increase self-efficacy for pain and help people sustain this improvement over time.

Reference
Marshall, A et al. (2021). Changes in Pain Self-Efficacy, Coping Skills, and Fear-Avoidance Beliefs in a Randomized Controlled Trial of Yoga, Physical Therapy, and Education for Chronic Low Back Pain. *Pain Medicine*.