

Therapeutic Effects of Yoga Nidra: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Yoga Nidra is a relaxation technique. The name “Yoga Nidra” derives from two Sanskrit words, “Yoga” which means union and “Nidra” which means sleep. Yoga Nidra is a state of consciousness, guided by meditation. The goal of Yoga Nidra is to move into a deep state of conscious awareness sleep. In modern aspect this works with autonomic nervous system. General objective of this study was to evaluate the clinical effects of Yoga Nidra. Specific objectives were to identify the therapeutic effects of Yoga Nidra for psychological diseases and to identify the therapeutic effects of Yoga Nidra for physical diseases. Literature searches were carried out using the words Yoga Nidra; typed into popular search engines, including Google and Google Scholar to find out the therapeutic effects of Yoga Nidra within the period of 06 months was the methodology. The study showed that Yoga Nidra is beneficial in reducing mental diseases such as stress, anxiety, insomnia and post-traumatic stress syndrome, psychosomatic disorders and physical diseases such as hormonal imbalance, pain in diseases, migraine and noncommunicable diseases; Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension and Cardiovascular diseases. Yoga Nidra has therapeutic effects, practice of it improves physical, mental and social well-being and it can be used as a preventive, promotive and curative technique were the conclusions of this study.

Keywords: Yoga Nidra, Depression, Anxiety, Noncommunicable diseases, well-being

INTRODUCTION

Yoga Nidra (YN), also known as yogic sleep/ psychic sleep, is a relaxation technique.¹ The name “*Yoga Nidra*” derives from two Sanskrit words. “*Yoga*” which means union and “*Nidra*” which means sleep. This *Yoga Nidra* is a state of consciousness, guided by meditation. But *Yoga Nidra* and meditation are two different practices. The goal of *Yoga Nidra* is to move into a deep state of conscious awareness sleep. In modern aspect this works with autonomic nervous system.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

To evaluate the clinical effects of *Yoga Nidra*.

Specific Objectives:

To identify the therapeutic effects of *Yoga Nidra* for psychological diseases.

To identify the therapeutic effects of *Yoga Nidra* for physical diseases.

Justification:

Benefits of practicing *Yoga Nidra* are improving memory power and reducing stress according to the common opinion by *Yoga Acharyas* at present. The therapeutic effects of *Yoga Nidra* must be identified by the physicians who are practicing yoga therapeutics.

Hypothesis:

H1: *Yoga Nidra* has therapeutic effects

H0: *Yoga Nidra* has no therapeutic effects

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Yoga Nidra

According to *Maharshi Markandey*, *Yoga Nidra* is the state of deep sleep relaxation. The text *Markandey Purna* mentioned that at the end of *Kalpa*, Lord *Vishnu* was lying on the bed of serpent in the state of *Yoga Nidra*.²

According to Swami *Satyananda Saraswati*, *YN* is a state of mind between wakefulness and dream.³

History of Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a part of *Yoga* philosophy, originated in India. *Yoga Nidra* (*YN*) is mentioned in *Sankhya* philosophy. *Upanishad* and *Maha Bahrata* also mentioned about *Yoga Nidra*.

Ancient time

Mahabharata, in 3rd century, is mentioned a state called as *yoga Nidra*. There was a goddess named as *Yoganidra* in *Devimahatmya*, written around 6th century.⁴

Medieval time

Yoga Nidra used in *Hatha yoga* and *Raja yoga* texts in 11th or 12th century. They used the word *Yoga Nidra* as a synonym for *Samadhi*, a deep state of meditative consciousness. In a *Shaiva* book *Yoga Nidra* is called "peace beyond words".⁴



Modern era

Authors such as *Annie Payson Call*, *Edmund Jacobson*, *Dennis Boyes*, *Satyananda Saraswati* and *Swami Rama* contributed their efforts for introducing *Yoga Nidra*.⁵

Method of doing Yoga Nidra

There are 8 stages of *Yoga Nidra*.³

- I. Relaxation- Primary preparation of the body.
- II. Affirmation (*Sankalpa*)- A personal goal previously decided upon is declared silently.
- III. Rotation of Consciousness
- IV. Respiration awareness - A period of awareness of the breath
- V. Manifestations of opposites - experience Pairs of feelings and emotions
- VI. Creative visualization- various types of images are mentally visualized.
- VII. Affirmation - repeat again
- VIII. Return to full awareness- gradually return to the normal state

There are 5 states of *yoga Nidra* according to *yoga Vedanta*.⁶

The waking state- *Jagrat Avastha*

The dream state- *Svapna Avastha*

The deep sleep state- *Sushupti Awastha*

The supra conscious state- *Turia Avastha*

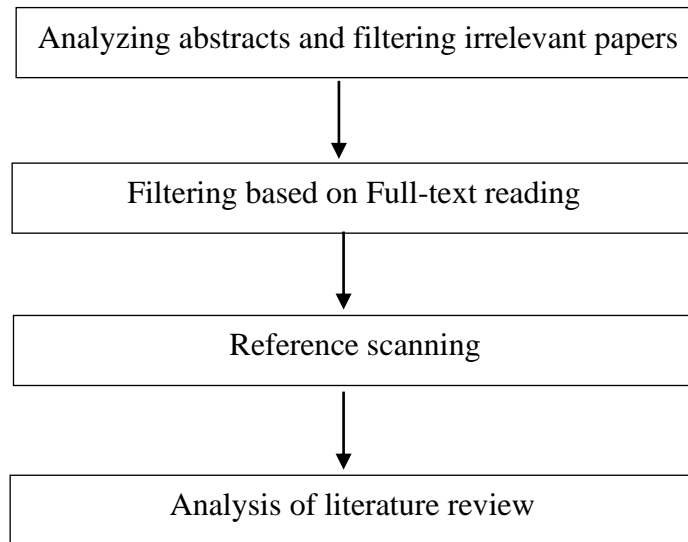
The state beyond states - *Turiyatita Avastha*

Yoga Nidra should be done in a peaceful, lighted and well-ventilated place and practitioner should be wear a comfortable and loose cloths.



MATERIALS & METHODS

Literature searches were carried out using the words *Yoga Nidra*; typed into popular search engines, including *Google* and *Google Scholar* to find out the therapeutic effects of *Yoga Nidra* within the period of 06 months.



DATA COLLECTION & RESULTS

	Research Title	Author	Findings
01	A study on the impact on stress and anxiety through Yoga Nidra. ⁷	K Kumar (2008)	YN relaxes the physical and mental stress. Relaxes the whole nervous system. Highly effective for reducing stress and anxiety.
02	Short communication effect of Yoga Nidra on blood glucose level in diabetic patients. ⁸	S.Amita et al (2009)	Reduced blood glucose level begin after 01 month of YN.
03	Yoga Nidra and its impact on student's well-being. ²	K.Kumar (2004)	Highly effective for reducing stress.
04	Impact of Yoga Nidra on physiological general well-being in patients with menstrual irregularities. ⁹	K.Rani et al (2011)	Decreased depression and anxiety. Increased positive wellbeing and general health.
05	iRest Yoga Nidra on the college campus: changes in stress, depression, worry and mindfulness. ¹⁰	HE Muller et al (2013)	Reduce symptoms of perceived stress, worry and depression and increase mindfulness-based skills.
06	Impact of Yoga Nidra on menstrual abnormalities in females of reproductive age. ¹¹	M Rani et al (2013)	Helpful in patients with hormone imbalances, such as dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia, metrorrhagia and hypomenorrhea.
07	Effects of a Yoga Nidra on the life stress and self- esteem in university students. ¹²	KS Dol (2019)	YN decreased life stress intensity level and increase the self-esteem.
08	Transforming trauma: A qualitative feasibility study of integrative restoration (iRest) Yoga Nidra on combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. ¹³	L. Stankovic (2011)	Reduced rage, anxiety and emotional reactivity and increased feelings of relaxation, peace, self-awareness and self- efficacy.
09	Using Yoga Nidra to improve stress in psychiatric nurses in a pilot study. ¹⁴	R Anderson (2017)	Reduced stress and muscle fatigue. Increased self-care, quality of life and sleep.
10	Effect of Yoga-Nidra on adolescents' well-being: A mixed method study. ¹⁵	Vaishnav B.S et al (2018)	Improve feelings of happiness, enthusiasm, quietude, being more inspired and alert, active, having clarity of thought, control over anger and self-confidence.
11	Effectiveness of Yoga Nidra in reducing stress in school going adolescents: An experimental study. ¹⁶	D'souza O.L. et al (2021)	Effectively reduced psychological stress in adolescents.
12	Yoga Nidra: An innovative approach for management of chronic insomnia. A case report. ¹⁷	Dutta K et al (2017)	Effective in management of chronic insomnia patients.
13	Delivering integrative restoration-Yoga Nidra meditation (iRest) to women with sexual trauma at a veteran's medical center: A pilot study. ¹⁸	Pence P. et al (2014)	Decreases in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, negative thoughts of self- blame and depression. Verbal reports of decreased body tension, improved quality of sleep, improved ability to handle intrusive thoughts, improved ability to manage stress and increased feeling of joy.
14	A study of the improvement of physical and mental health through Yoga Nidra. ¹⁹	K. Kumar (2006)	The improvement of physical and mental health as a result of practicing YN.
15	Effect of Yoga Nidra on the self-esteem and body image of burn patients. ²⁰	A.Ozdemir et al (2019)	Increases self-esteem and improves the body image of burn patients.
16	Yoga Nidra as a stress management intervention strategy. ³	M.K.Dwivedi et al (2020)	YN has a great potential to decrease the stress level. Increases the parasympathetic system which results into physical, mental and emotional relaxation in our body.
17	Using Yoga Nidra recordings for pain management in patients undergoing colonoscopy. ²¹	Lijun Li MD et al (2019)	Helped reduce the pain in participants undergoing colonoscopy experienced.

18	Effectiveness of Yoga Nidra in mitigating stress in women undergoing curative radiotherapy for cervical cancer. ²²	R D'cunha (2021)	YN was effective in reducing the stress in cervical cancer patients.
19	A comparative study of Yoga Nidra and Nadisodhana Pranayama on essential hypertension. ²³	R. Manik et al (2016)	YN group showed a significant reduction in blood pressure, pulse rate, breath rate, BMI and Hamilton anxiety rating scale.
20	Effect of Yoga Nidra on resting cardiovascular parameters in polycystic ovarian syndrome women. ²⁴	A. Vanitha et al. (2018)	Favorable changes in blood pressure, Heart Rate and other anthropometric parameters in PCOS after 12 weeks of YN intervention.
21	Effectiveness of Yoga Nidra intervention (Meditation) in improving well-being of an individual. ²⁵	M.K.Dwivedi (2022)	Significant influence of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual components on well-being.
22	Role of Yoga-Nidra and Shirodhara on hypertensive patients. ²⁶	S.Devi et al (2015)	Significantly reduced systolic and diastolic pressure.
23	Effect of Yoga Nidra on blood pressure, Hs-CRP and lipid profile of hypertensive subjects: A pilot study. ²⁷	J.P.Devraj et al (2021)	Significant reduction in Systolic Blood Pressure, Diastolic Blood Pressure and MAP in YN intervention group.
24	Effect of yoga nidra and pranayama on stress and social adjustment capacity of tribal students. ²⁸	B.Chowdhary (2014)	Significant improvement was found in stress performance and social adjustment performance in both group.
25	Transformative effects of yoga nidra on hedonic and eudemonic dimensions of well-being: A qualitative study in trainee teachers. ²⁹	B.S.Vaishnav (2019)	Conducting regular YN enhances hedonic and eudemonic dimensions of well-being. Minimizing negative emotions and enhancing positive emotions. Bringing about a clarity and stability of thinking process and aligning individual and societal goals.
26	Effect of yoga nidra on quality of among young female adults during COVID -19 pandemic. ³⁰	V.P.Neeraja et al (2022)	YN significantly improved the sleep quality.
27	Reversing the ischemic heart disease through yoga nidra. ³¹	K.Kumar (2006)	YN can be considered as an effective practice as a preventive measure of IHD.
28	Mental rejuvenation through yoga nidra. ³²	J.Singh (2022)	Helps to organize inner thoughts and stay focused on solving issues with a positive attitude.
29	Effect of yoga nidra on the brain activity in individuals with migrane. ³³	HC. Shashikirn et al (2022)	YN induces relaxation through enhanced alpha waves. YN can be used as an effective tool in combating stress and neuropsychiatric symptoms in migraine patients.
30	A study of the effect of yoga nidra on mental health of emotionally abused adolescents. ³⁴	RP Lata et al (2014)	YN significantly improves mental health of adolescents.

According to the above 30 researches the following benefits of Yoga Nidra were found as results.

	Therapeutic effect of Yoga Nidra
Improve mental health	Reduce Stress
	Reduce anxiety
	reduce depression
	Helpful in post-traumatic stress syndrome
	Relax nervous system
	Increase positive well-being
	Increase mindfulness
	Increase sleep
	Increase self-esteem, self-awareness, self-care, self-confidence
Improve physical health	Reduce blood glucose level
	Helpful in menstrual disorders
	Helpful in burnt patients
	Reduce pain
	Reduce blood pressure
	Helpful in ischemic heart disease
Helpful in migraine	

DISCUSSION

Present days, many people suffering from stress and anxiety due to competitive life style. Noncommunicable Diseases are also a number one cause of death in the world and need long term treatments. The medicines are also expensive. Therefore, people need alternative method for increase their quality of life. The study shows that *Yoga Nidra* is

beneficial in reduce mental diseases such as stress, anxiety, insomnia and post-traumatic stress syndrome, psychosomatic disorders and physical diseases such as hormonal imbalance, pain in diseases, migraine and noncommunicable diseases; Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension and Cardiovascular diseases.³⁵

CONCLUSION

Yoga Nidra is effective for the improvements in physical, mental and social well-being and it can be used as a preventive, promotive and curative technique.

Declaration by Authors

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