

ABSTRACT -

The efficacy of Yoga Therapy as a Treatment for Sleep Disturbance.

J. Burt, J. Goossens

Australian Institute of Yoga Therapy and the Centre for Adult Education

Keywords: Yoga, Yoga Therapy, Sleep Disturbance, Insomnia

Objective:

There is growing interest in the use of Yoga Therapy for treatment of some medical and psychological conditions. This study aimed to explore the efficacy of Yoga Therapy in the treatment for Sleep Disturbance or Insomnia.

Method:

Ten clients of a local Yoga Studio who were troubled by Insomnia were invited to take part in a Yoga Therapy Program. The Program consisted of six weekly one hour Yoga Therapy sessions at the Studio as a group, the techniques learned were applied at home between sessions. All participants completed a questionnaire exploring their life patterns and sleep problems for the month prior to starting the Program, and immediately the Program ended. The questions covered firstly Demographics, then Occupational, Physical and Social Functioning, and General Health, Quality of Life and Emotional Health scored on a 5 point scale from worst to best. Pre- and post-Program Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index questionnaires were also completed.

Results:

Participation in the Yoga Therapy Program and home application of the techniques learnt were excellent, as was completion of the questionnaires. Occupational functioning improved 24.6%, Physical functioning improved 16.1%, Social functioning improved 20.6%; General Health improved 9.1%, Quality of Life improved 31.25% and Emotional Health improved 36.7%. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index showed improvement in sleep duration, sleep efficiency and sleep quality Components (Components 1, 3, 4, and 5). Examination of the Global Scores showed that all participants improved sufficiently in enough Components to register a significant average improvement in their overall sleep quality and quantity of 20%, which flowed on to their life patterns.

Conclusion:

The Yoga Therapy Program resulted in a significant improvement in Participant's sleep patterns using easily replicated Yoga, breathing and relaxation techniques, and provided impetus for the institution of a longer, wider and controlled study into the efficacy of Yoga Therapy in the treatment of Insomnia.

Presented in fulfilment of the requirements of a minor thesis for the Graduate Certificate in Yoga Therapy, Australian tertiary accredited course code 21720VIC, Melbourne, Australia. 2009.