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A Pilot Study of Yoga for Chronic Headaches in Youth: Promise Amidst Challenges

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Abstract

The primary aim of the current study was to provide preliminary data on the feasibility, acceptability, and safety of alignment-based yoga for youths with chronic headaches. A secondary aim was to provide preliminary estimates of yoga's ability to improve headache pain, daily functioning, quality of life, and anxiety level in this population. The yoga intervention consisted of 8 weekly, 75-minute classes. Participant flow data revealed challenges to feasibility primarily due to recruitment and retention. Scores on most outcome measures changed in the predicted direction with medium effect sizes found for the functional outcomes. Pain measures did not change significantly. This pilot suggests that yoga for pediatric headaches may be acceptable, as indicated by positive parent and participant ratings of the yoga experience. These preliminary findings suggest that yoga trials for pediatric headaches include both challenges and promise. Recommendations for overcoming challenges include designs that optimize family convenience.



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