



Effects of Yoga in patients with paroxysmal atrial fibrillation

Background:

Patients with atrial fibrillation often have an impaired quality of life (QoL). Practicing yoga may decrease stress and have positive effects on mental and physical health. The aim of this study was to investigate whether yoga can improve QoL and decrease blood pressure and heart rate in patients with paroxysmal atrial fibrillation (PAF).

Methods:

In this pilot study, eighty patients diagnosed with PAF were randomized to standard treatment (control group, $n=40$) or standard treatment in combination with yoga (yoga group, $n=40$) during a 12-week period. QoL, blood pressure and heart rate were evaluated at baseline and at the end of the study (12 (+2) weeks). EQ-5D VAS-scale and the two dimensions in SF-36 were used to evaluate QoL.

Results:

At baseline there was a significant difference in QoL between the groups in EQ-5D VAS-scale ($p=0.02$) and SF-36 mental health score ($p<0.001$) in which the control group had higher scores. At the end of the study, the yoga group averaged higher SF-36 mental health scores. There was a significant difference between the two groups ($p=0.016$), but no differences in EQ-5D VAS-scale and physiological health score were seen between the two groups. At the end of the study, the yoga group had significantly lower heart rate ($p=0.024$) and systolic ($p=0.033$) and diastolic blood pressure ($p<0.001$) compared to the control group.

Conclusions:

Yoga with light movements and deep breathing may lead to improved QoL, lower blood pressure and lower heart rate in patients with PAF compared to a control group. Yoga could be a complementary treatment method to standard therapy.