



The effect of yoga practice on blood pressure in patients with hypertension

Background and purpose

High blood pressure is one of the most common diseases in the West and the cost of medical treatment for high blood pressure and complications associated with it are constantly increasing. We know that stress affects blood pressure but it is a factor that is difficult to impact. Several studies have shown that yoga can have a lowering effect on blood pressure and can reduce levels of stress hormones in the body. The purpose of the study was to study the effect of yoga on the blood pressure of patients in primary care who had received a hypertension diagnosis at least one year prior to the study.

Methods and materials

The study was set up as a randomized controlled trial. Half of the 24 patients who registered as participants were randomly placed in an intervention cohort (health consultations and 15 minutes of yoga twice a day) and the second half in a control cohort (health consultation and rest for 15 minutes twice a day). All patients underwent 24-hour blood pressure monitoring ahead of the health consultation and after six weeks with/without intervention.

Results

No significant reduction in blood pressure could be observed in either of the cohorts. In the yoga cohort the 24-hour average systolic pressure fell by 4.4 mm Hg, while in the control/rest cohort it was unchanged (± 0 mm Hg). The difference in blood pressure reduction between the cohorts was not statistically significant either.

Conclusion

The study does not provide a basis for any conclusion on whether it is possible to use yoga to reduce blood pressure in primary care patients with hypertension. The study does, however, show a clear trend of blood pressure reduction in the yoga cohort (-4.4 mm Hg), and it is interesting to note that resting twice a day does not appear to have any blood pressure reducing effect (± 0 mm Hg). More extensive studies are needed to determine whether yoga is a potential treatment option for patients with hypertension at health clinics. A comparison between the effect on blood pressure of individuals practicing yoga on their own (according to the model used)