

Abstract

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Breathing and a Meditation Program for Burnout Among Physicians - A Randomized Clinical Trial

by Fahri Saatcioglu^{1,2}

¹Department of Biosciences, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

²Institute for Cancer Genetics and Informatics, Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway

doi: [10.61936/themind/2024121219](https://doi.org/10.61936/themind/2024121219)

Physicians are exposed to high levels of stress that results in burnout, which affects them, their families, their patients, and the entire health care system. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is a comprehensive yoga breathing and meditation-based program that is a potential approach to mitigate physician burnout. This randomized clinical trial assessed the potential efficacy of SKY compared with a stress management education (SME) training as control in actively practicing physicians (n=129; SME=63, SKY=66) (Korkmaz et al., 2024). Both the SKY and the SME control groups received 1.5 hours of training for 3 consecutive days via a group video conference call.

After the 3-day instruction period, the participants in the SKY group practiced for approximately 30 minutes per day on their own and the SME group applied the notes from the training in their daily lives. Both groups participated in a weekly 1-hour, group-based online follow-up practice for 8 weeks. At baseline, right after and 8 weeks after the

instruction, we measured stress, anxiety and depression (by the 42-item Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale [DASS-42]), insomnia (by the Regensburg Insomnia Scale [RIS]), optimism (by the Life Orientation Test-Revised [LOT-R]), professional fulfillment, work exhaustion, interpersonal disengagement, and overall burnout (by the Professional Fulfillment Index [PFI]).

Compared with the SME group, participants in the SKY group had significantly decreased stress, depression and anxiety. The SKY group also showed significantly increased professional fulfillment as well as significant decreases in work exhaustion, interpersonal disengagement, and burnout. In addition, there was a significant decrease in insomnia from baseline to postintervention in the SKY group. These data suggest that SKY may be an effective, practical, and safe strategy to increase wellness and mitigate stress and burnout in physicians as well as in other vulnerable professions.

Keywords: stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, work satisfaction, physicians

References

Korkmaz, A., Bernhardsen, G. P., Cirit, B., Koprucu Suzer, G., Kayan, H., Bicmen, H., Tahra, M., Suner, A., Lehto, S. M., Sag, D., and Saatcioglu, F. (2024) Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Breathing and a Meditation Program for Burnout Among Physicians: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Netw Open*, 7, e2353978