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Dr. Vinu Bhaskar
Associate Professor,
Department of Physical
Education, Govt. T.D. Medical
College, Alappuzha, Kerala,
India

Effect of Surya namaskar on self-esteem and body image of sedentary middle aged women

Dr. Vinu Bhaskar

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of Surya namaskar on Self Esteem and Body Image of sedentary middle aged women. The subjects of the study were sixty sedentary middle aged women from Alappuzha, Kerala, India. The average age of the subjects was 45 years, ranging from 40 to 50 years. The subjects were equally assigned to one experimental group and one control group by using random sampling method. Pre- test was conducted for the experimental and control groups for the selected variables and data is recorded. The experimental group participated in the training program three days per week for a period of 12weeks. The control group was not allowed to do any form of exercises during this period. The data were taken at the conclusion of the period of 12 weeks. Self Esteem was measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE). Body Image was assessed by the 23-item Body Cathexis Scale. To find out the significant differences between Pre-test and Post-test scores of experimental and control groups data were analyzed by applying 't' test. The level of significance was .05. The mean obtained by the two groups found different from each other. The findings of the study indicated that experimental group was significantly better than the control group.

Keywords: Surya namaskar, self-esteem, body image & sedentary

Introduction

The desire to be healthy and attractive is almost universal. The best way to improve bodily measurement and proportion is through a combination of appropriate diet and exercise. To develop body symmetry and good posture, one should engage in gross motor activities rather than specialize in one activity that develops only one area of the total fitness of the body. Health and wellness promotion includes efforts to alter personal life-style to enhance the quality of life, just as physical fitness is altered by regular physical activity. Wellness is a state of being that is altered by one's behavior that is partially or totally in one's own control. Some of the healthy life-styles that are considered to be very important to optimal wellness are exercising regularly, eating properly, managing stress, learning first-aid, adopting good personal health behaviors, protecting the environment and managing time effectively ^[1].

The relationship between self-esteem and physical activity has been well researched. In 1989, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force of the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion concluded that regular exercise could improve self-esteem. People who place great importance on their physical appearance and fitness, and who are not satisfied with these areas commonly show the biggest improvements in self-esteem. Even if there is no actual improvement in fitness, an individual's self-esteem may improve just from receiving positive comments about their physique from others. Similarly, the mere expectation of an increase in fitness, or the person's belief they are doing something positive for themselves can improve self-esteem. A sense of achievement rather than actual achievement is the important element ^[2].

Body image assessment techniques were initially produced to help psychologists understand body image disturbances. Measurement procedures have mainly focused on two aspects of body image: a perceptual component and a subjective component. The perceptual component is also known as size perception accuracy, and is measured by subjects matching the width of the distance between two points to their own estimation of their body size or a particular body site. It has also been measured using schematic figures of different body sizes, where individuals are asked to choose the body size they think reflects their own. The subjective component refers to the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction felt about the body's appearance and function. This has been measured by comparing actual and ideal body sizes. Many questionnaire measures, Body Cathexis Scale also assess subjective representations of

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Vinu Bhaskar
Associate Professor,
Department of Physical
Education, Govt. T.D. Medical
College, Alappuzha, Kerala,
India

physical appearance, whereby respondents rate the degree of satisfaction they feel about various body parts [9]. A successful exercise program can improve one’s self image and self esteem. It can make a person feel good and develop a positive view about life. Today young people are willing to spend more time and money for this purpose. Elder generation of today is well aware of the need and importance of possessing a healthy lifestyle. But it is not possible for every one to spend a huge amount in the health clubs and gymnasiums especially in such a poor country like India. Here comes the significance of low cost and easily available training methods. One such method could be Suryanamskar. The current study was performed to examine the effect of Surya namaskar on self –esteem and body image of sedentary middle aged women.

Methodology

Sixty sedentary middle aged women of the age group of 40 to 50 years from Alappuzha, Kerala, India were selected as subjects for the study. The subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental group (N=30) and a control group (N=30). The experimental group had to undergone Surya namaskar, thrice a week for the period of 12 weeks. The control group did not involve in any similar form of training. The Surya namaskar was performed for duration of 40 minutes. The intensity was bi-weekly increased by increasing the number of rounds of Surya namaskar. Two weeks of adaptations period was also given. The data pertaining to selected variables such as Self Esteem, Body Image were collected by administering the appropriate test and measurement procedures. Self-esteem was measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) [12]. This is a self-administered questionnaire measuring

subjective perceptions of self-esteem, or perceived self-worth on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 4 in the direction of negative self-esteem, yielding a summed score of 10 - 40. Half the items are expressions of positive self-esteem and half are negative. The higher the score, the more negative the self-esteem. Low scores indicate high self-esteem. The RSE is the most widely used measure of global self-esteem within health psychology. It is a reliable, valid measure and has shown an internal consistency of .87. [3].

Body image was assessed by the 23-item Body Cathexis Scale [9]. This is also a self-report questionnaire measuring the individual’s attitude towards their body. Body Cathexis refers to the degree of feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various parts of the body. Response to each item is along a five-point Likert-type scale in the direction of dissatisfaction with a ‘not important to me’ option receiving a score of 0 if selected. This will result in a summed score of 0 - 115. The higher the score, the more dissatisfaction with the body is indicated, the lower the score, the greater the satisfaction with the appearance of one’s body. The split-half reliability of the body cathexis scale has been found to be satisfactory at .81. [9]

Statistical Analysis

To determine the difference between pre and post test means dependent ‘t’ test was employed.

Results

The data pertaining to the selected variables of the experimental and control groups were tested with ‘t’ test. The level of significance chosen was 0.05 level. The obtained ‘t’ values were presented in the table 1

Table 1: Difference in means of Experimental and Control Groups in Self Esteem and Body Image of sedentary middle aged women

Variable	Group	Number	Initial Mean	Final Mean	Mean difference	S.E	‘t’ ratio
Self Esteem	EXP.	30	20	17	3	0.092	19.20**
	CON.	30	19	18	1	1.333	1.00
Body Image	EXP.	30	84	75	9	1.522	6.17**
	CON.	30	76	75	1	0163	1.57

** Significant at .01 level of confidence; t’ value needed for the significance at .01 level with 29 degrees of freedom is 2.756. [EXP - Experimental Group; CON -Control Group]

From table 1 it is evident that in the case of the experimental group, significant changes were noticed in all the selected strength variables following 12weeks of Surya namaskar. The obtained ‘t’ values for the Self Esteem was 19.20; Body

Image was 6.17. All are higher than the required table values. In the case of the control group, there was no changes were seen in all the selected variables.

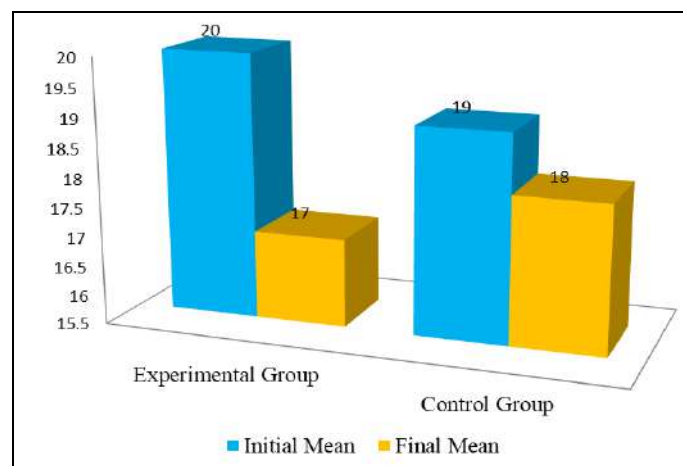


Fig 1: Mean Difference in Self Esteem for Experimental and Control Groups (Means in number)

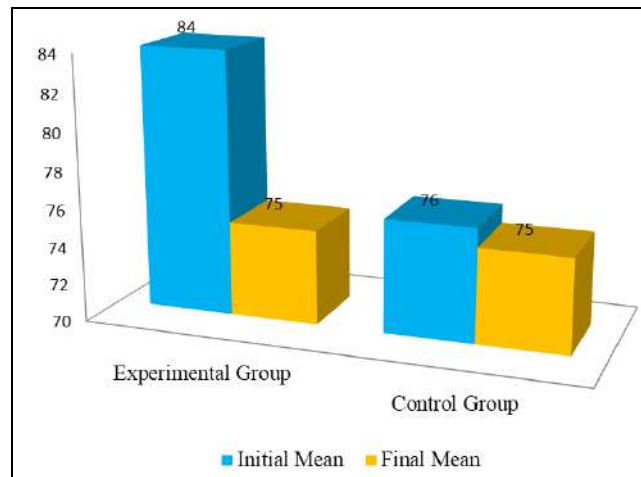


Fig 2: Mean Difference in Body Image for Experimental and Control Groups (Means in number)

Discussion of Findings

The 12weeks Surya namaskar was associated with changes to the selected variables in the subjects under the study. The findings of the present study show that Self –Esteem and Body Image improved in the case of the experimental group. There were no differences found in any of the variables for the control group. The self –esteem and body image changed in the experimental group supports the hypotheses and is consistent with research supporting this relationship and would be the common outcome of participating in exercise ^[10]. Women were more likely to exercise in the pursuit of bodily attractiveness than men, and women who experienced the most body dissatisfaction were even more likely to exercise for appearance and weight control. Body dissatisfaction is correlated with social physique anxiety, and this anxiety may intensify in exercise settings such as in aerobics and keep-fit classes. In these situations there is a greater emphasis on the female form, which in turn may reinforce the cult of thinness and femininity ^[13]. Cultural and social factors emphasise unrealistic body shapes and according to ^[7] thinness is joined by fitness within the body shape ideal. It may be that though exercise enhances a woman’s perceived body image, her idealised body image begins to shift toward a thinner standard, and her ensuing dissatisfaction remains the same regardless of objective improvement ^[6]. In conclusion the present study shows that participation in the 12week of Surya namaskar improves self-esteem and body image.

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