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BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER YOGA THERAPY ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF SENIOR CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of laughter yoga therapy on the mental health of senior citizens. For this study survey was conducted with the help of Questionnaire prepared by the researcher under the guidance of subject expert & guide. Seven yoga clubs out of fifteen, from Eastern area of pune city were selected randomly. There were 1456 registered members out of which 295 were selected from the randomly selected clubs. Out of these 295 members, 250 members answered fully Questionnaire were taken for data analysis.

Data collection was done after they finished their daily routine of the club. The statistical tools used are percentile. As per the result from this study is may be concluded that laughter yoga therapy has a highly positive impact on health related problems of senior citizens.



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KEY WORDS: Laughter yoga, Health, Senior Citizens.

INTRODUCTION :

Laughter yoga-(Hasyayoga) is a practice involving prolonged voluntary laughter. Laughter yoga is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides the physiological and mental benefits as spontaneous laughter. Laughter yoga is done in groups, with eye contact, jokes and playfulness between participants. Forced laughter soon turns into real and contagious laughter.

Method-

Laughter yoga sessions may start with gentle warm-up techniques which include stretching, chanting, clapping, eye contact and body movement, to help break down inhibitions and encourage a sense of playfulness. Breathing exercises are used to prepare the lungs for laughter, followed by a series of 'laughter exercises' that combine the method of acting and visualization techniques with playfulness. Laughter exercises are interspersed with breathing exercises. Twenty minutes of laughter is sufficient to develop full physiological benefits.

A laughter Yoga session may finish with “Laughter Meditation.” This session of unstructured laughter where by participants sit or lie down & allow natural laughter to flow from within like a fountain. This is a powerful experience that often leads to a healthy emotional catharsis & also a feeling of release & joyfulness. This can be followed by guided relaxation exercises.

Laughter Yoga includes four things:

1. Clapping in rhythm to ‘ho-ho-ha-ha-ha’.
2. Breathing and stretching.
3. Child-like play.
- 4- Laughter exercises.

We change physiologically when we laugh. We stretch muscles throughout our face & body, our pulse & blood pressure go up, & we breathe faster, sending more oxygen to our tissues.

“World Laughter Day” takes place on the first Sunday in May. The first celebration was on January 11, 1998 in Mumbai, India, was arranged by Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of the worldwide Laughter Yoga movement. The celebration of World Laughter Day was meant to be a positive manifestation for world peace & to build up a global consciousness of brotherhood & friendship through laughter. As of 2011 there are more than 8000 Laughter Clubs in 65 Countries. Each Club has its own Laugh captain & operates as an independent cell.

Laughter Yoga Therapy has stress management benefits relive depression, reduce stress and tension, anxiety & psychosomatic disorders, natural pain killer, improve self-confidence, promote relaxation & improve sleep, improve mental health & mental function, improve overall attitude. Laughter protect heart, gives you a mini work-out, balanced blood pressure, improves breathing, lose weight, alleviates bronchitis & asthma, make you look younger, blood sugar level control, for cancer patients, relives pain, relax muscles throughout the body, enhance oxygen intake, internal workout improves stamina & also effective for improves social life and boosts interpersonal relationships.

For understanding the effects related to participating in Yoga Laughter Club which was not just laughter club but has an Indian touch with yoga activity inclusion in the daily routine of the club, the researcher has conducted the survey.

RESEARCH METHOD

Survey was conducted with the help of the teacher made questionnaire. Seven Laughter Yoga Clubs out of fifteen, form eastern area of Pune City were selected randomly. There were 1456 registered members out of which 295 were selected randomly from the randomly selected clubs. Out of these 295 members 250 members answered full questionnaire and those were taken for data analysis. Data collection was done after they finished their daily routine of the club. One hour daily routine of the clubs was as follows;

1. Standing in circle & start clapping
2. Prayer-
 - a) Shloka reading
 - b) Omkar
 - c) Vaidic Mantra
3. Laughing Exercise- (20-25 Minutes)
 - a) Compulsory- 13 Types
 - b) Optional- 12-15 Types (Total Laughing Types 73)
 - c) Deep breathing Types- 1,2,3,4
4. Thoughts, Slogan etc.
5. General Exercise
 - a) Suryanamskar
 - b) Simple stretching exercise
 - c) Yogasanas

- d) Simple Aerobic exercise
- e) Different group games
- 6. Pranayama
- 7. Singing, Group Dance, Bhajan, Birthday Celebration etc.
- 8. Omkar & Closing Prayer
- 9. Group Pledge.

FINDINGS-

1) Mental Benefits-

- a) It was found that total 88% (N-220) members admitted that participating Laughter Yoga Club activity reduces Stress & tension.
- b) It was found that total 84% (N-210) members admitted that participating laughing club activity decreases Hostility.
- c) After analysis total 80% (N-200) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improve overall attitude.
- d) It was observed that total 80.00% (N-200) members admitted that participating Laughter Yoga Club activity promotes relaxation & improves sleep.
- e) It was observed that 70 % (N-175) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves Mood & subjective well-being increased (self).
- f) It was found that total 68% (N-170) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves mental Health.
- g) It was found that 68% (N-170) members admitted that participating laughing club activity decreases Anxiety & Depression.
- h) It was observed that 64% (N-160) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves self-Acceptances & self Confidence.
- i) It was found that 64% (N-160) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves Memory.
- j) It was found that 60% (N-150) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves Attention.
- k) It was observed that 60% (N-150) members admitted that participating laughing club activity improves Learning Efficiency.

Negative Points-

It was found that total 88% (N-220) members admitted that by participating in laughing club activity, their concentration was not improved.

Table
Participants’ perception about Mental Benefits of doing laughter yoga Therapy

Benefits	Yes	No	Don’t No
Reduce stress & tension	88.0	0.0	12.0
Hostility decreases	84.0	0.0	16.0
Improve overall attitude	88.0	0.0	12.0
Promotes relaxation & improves sleep	80.0	1.0	19.0
Mood improves & subjective well-being increase(self)	70.0	0.0	30.0
Improve mental health	68.0	0.0	32.0
Anxiety & Depression decreases	68.0	1.8	30.2
Self-acceptance & self-confidence improves	64.0	0.0	36.0
Memory improves	64.0	16.0	20.0
Attention improves	60.0	1.0	39.0
Learning efficiency improves	60.0	9.0	31.0
Concentration improves	10.0	88.0	2.0

CONCLUSION:

Participating in the Laughter yoga therapy clubs has a positive impact on mental Health related problems for senior citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

1. Each Laughter Club should appoint a well-trained coach.
2. A proper shelter should be provided by Municipal Corporation, so that these clubs get the cover space in rainy seasons.
3. The number of parks must increase, so that the numbers of clubs increase.
4. Yearly physical fitness check-up is necessary.

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