



Laughter yoga, adults living with Parkinson's disease, and caregivers: A pilot study

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Abstract

Objective

This study explored outcomes of Laughter Yoga in adults with Parkinson's disease (PD) and their caregivers. Laughter has been shown to generally improve mood in physically healthy adults, and specifically in adults with heart disease or cancer, but little research exists regarding the impact of laughter in adults with Parkinson's disease. Low mood is frequently a co-morbid condition for adults with Parkinson's disease, and can negatively affect their caregivers.

Design

Pre-experimental (O₁ X O₂) pretest-posttest design.

Settings/Location

Data collection occurred at six unique PD support groups in Southern California.

Subjects

Participants (N=85) comprised a convenience sample of adults diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (n=47) and accompanying caregivers (n=38).

Intervention

Subjects participated in a 45-minute Laughter Yoga (LY) session conducted by a Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher.

Outcome Measures

This study utilized the Laughter Yoga "How Do You Feel?" (HDYF) form. The form consists of a series of 10 scales labeled "well-being" measures including enthusiasm, energy level, mood, optimism, stress level, level of friendship with group members, level of awareness about breathing, level of muscle relaxation, level of mental relaxation, and ability to laugh without a reason.

Results & Conclusion

Paired sample t-tests reveal statistically significant improvements in well-being for adults with PD and their caregivers after attending an LY session. Therapists and other clinicians should consider utilizing this unique technique with adults with PD to address co-morbid low-mood conditions and include caregivers in the LY sessions for support and their own benefit.

Keywords

- Laughter Yoga;
- Parkinson's disease;
- Wellbeing;
- Caregivers

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