Yoga Improves Quality of Life

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Yoga therapy for men with prostate cancer helped increase quality of life and led to improvements in inflammation and immune function, according to research published in Nature Prostate Cancer.

Diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer can lead to anxiety, fear, depression and psychological stress, and this can have a negative effect on immune function.

Dharam Kaushik, MD, of the University of Texas, and colleagues designed a randomized clinical trial to evaluate a yoga therapy program for men with newly diagnosed prostate cancer who were scheduled for surgery. Those assigned to the program participated in hatha yoga sessions for 60 to 75 minutes at least twice a week, performed breathing exercises and practiced pelvic floor engagement during seated meditation.

The men who did yoga had higher quality-of-life scores, with improvements in functional, physical and social well-being, sexual function and fatigue. What's more, they had more robust immune responses and lower levels of inflammation, with increases in cancer-fighting CD4 and CD8 T cells and decreases in immune cells that suppress antitumor activity.

"This is positive data, and further large-scale studies are needed," Kaushik says. "If we are able to encourage patients to do a small, inexpensive and easy-to-implement intervention that can have a big impact, then why not?"

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