Goldstein MR, Lewis GF, Newman R, Brown JM, Bobashev G, Kilpatrick L, Seppälä EM, Fishbein DH, Meleth S. (2016). Improvements in well-being and vagal tone following a yogic breathing-based life skills workshop in young adults: Two open-trial pilot studies. Int J Yoga 9(1):20-6.

BACKGROUND:
While efficacy of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) has been demonstrated in a number of prior studies, little is known about the effects of SKY taught as part of the Your Enlightened Side (YES+) workshop designed for college students and other young adults.

AIMS:
This study aimed to assess the effects of YES+, a yogic breathing-based life skills workshop, on multiple measures of well-being and physiological stress response.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:
Two nonrandomized open-trial pilot studies were conducted with a total of 74 young adults (age 25.4 ± 6.6 years; 55% female). Study 1 collected a variety of self-report questionnaires at baseline, postworkshop, and 1-month follow-up. Study 2 collected self-report questionnaires in addition to electrocardiography with a stationary cycling challenge at baseline and 1-month follow-up.

RESULTS:
Study 1: Improvements in self-reported depression (P's ≤ 0.010), perceived stress (P's ≤ 0.002), life satisfaction (P's ≤ 0.002), social connectedness (P's ≤ 0.004), and gratitude (P's ≤ 0.090) were observed at postworkshop and 1-month after workshop relative to baseline. Study 2: Improvements in self-reported emotion regulation were observed at 1-month follow-up relative to baseline (P = 0.019). Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-Expanded Form positive affect increased (P = 0.021), while fatigue and sadness decreased (P's ≤ 0.005). During the stationary cycling challenge, rate to recovery of electrocardiography inter-beat interval also increased from baseline to 1-month follow-up (P = 0.077).

CONCLUSIONS:
These findings suggest that a life skills workshop integrating yogic breathing techniques may provide self-empowering tools for enhancing well-being in young adults. Future research is indicated to further explore these effects, particularly in regards to vagal tone and other aspects of stress physiology.