

Sharma, A., Barrett, M.S., Cucchiara, A.J., Gooneratne, N.S., Thase, M.E. (2016). A Breathing-Based Meditation Intervention for Patients With Major Depressive Disorder Following Inadequate Response to Antidepressants: A Randomized Pilot Study. *J Clin Psychiatry* Nov 22. doi: 10.4088/JCP.16m10819. [Epub ahead of print]

OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate feasibility, efficacy, and tolerability of Sudarshan Kriya yoga (SKY) as an adjunctive intervention in patients with major depressive disorder (MDD) with inadequate response to antidepressant treatment.

METHODS:

Patients with MDD (defined by DSM-IV-TR) who were depressed despite ≥ 8 weeks of antidepressant treatment were randomized to SKY or a waitlist control (delayed yoga) arm for 8 weeks. The primary efficacy end point was change in 17-item Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS-17) total score from baseline to 2 months. The key secondary efficacy end points were change in Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) total scores. Analyses of the intent-to-treat (ITT) and completer sample were performed. The study was conducted at the University of Pennsylvania between October 2014 and December 2015.

RESULTS:

In the ITT sample ($n = 25$), the SKY arm ($n = 13$) showed a greater improvement in HDRS-17 total score compared to waitlist control ($n = 12$) (-9.77 vs 0.50, $P = .0032$). SKY also showed greater reduction in BDI total score versus waitlist control (-17.23 vs -1.75, $P = .0101$). Mean changes in BAI total score from baseline were significantly greater for SKY than waitlist (ITT mean difference: -5.19; 95% CI, -0.93 to -9.34; $P = .0097$; completer mean difference: -6.23; 95% CI, -1.39 to -11.07; $P = .0005$). No adverse events were reported.

CONCLUSIONS:

Results of this randomized, waitlist-controlled pilot study suggest the feasibility and promise of an adjunctive SKY-based intervention for patients with MDD who have not responded to antidepressants. TRIAL REGISTRATION: ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT02616549.