

Effects of Yogic Intervention Program on Psychological Immunity of the Active Armed Forces Personnel of India

Abstract

Background: The military is one of the most important institutions for any country. So, it should be pathology free physically, mentally, and emotionally fit soldiers who share positive psychological traits, positive emotions, and positive interpersonal relations. Improving the psychological immunity of armed forces personnel so that they can handle effectively the stressors which they face in their job is very necessary.

Aim: The study aims to assess the effects of a yogic intervention program on the psychological immunity of armed forces personnel.

Methods: Pre-test – Post-test control group design was adopted for the study. 40 samples were selected for the study. The purposive sampling method was used. Samples were equally divided into two groups: control and experimental. Psycho-Immunity Scale (PIS) was used to assess the level of psycho-immunity of the personnel. A yogic intervention program was provided to the experimental group every day of the week except Sunday for a month in the morning from 6:30 to 7:30 AM. All the participants were analysed through PIS before and after the experimental group was provided the intervention.

Results: Data was analysed by using SPSS. A significant difference in the level of psycho-immunity of the experimental group was found ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: The yoga intervention program significantly enhanced the level of psycho-immunity of the armed forces personnel. The intervention program developed in this study can be applied to other populations also. The practice of yoga should be part of the training of the armed forces. It will enhance their overall functioning.

Key words: Psychological immunity, Health Psychology, Military Psychology, Yogic Intervention, Public Health

Effects of an Yogic Intervention Program on Psychological Immunity in Active Armed Forces Personnel of India

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Background

- Psycho-immunity is relatively a new idea in the field of modern psychology. In general, it refers to mental immunity against any mental as well as emotional problems. Our mind possesses an immune system against mental and emotional issues in the similar manner as our body to the physical problems (Vasudevan, 2003).
- Physical immunity protects the body from all types of diseases. In the same manner psychological immunity protects from all mental and emotional disorders or problems. It is a complex mechanism that works in parallel with physical or biological immunity (Bonanno, 2004).
- Rachman (Rachman, S. 2019, p. 5) defined psychological immunity as the totality of such personality traits that makes an individual capable to withstand the effects of stress and burnout. The experiences gained from this is integrated in such a way that it does not affect the overall functioning of the individual, as it produces psychological immunity that protects the individual from stressful environmental situations.
- Psychological immunity serves as both, a protective as well as promotive mechanism (Kaur & Som, 2020).
- The military is one of the most important institutions for any country. Defence and military are the reason any country stands strong in the world. Military personnel should be pathology free and show physical, mental, and emotional dexterity. Fit soldiers who share positive psychological traits, emotions, and interpersonal relations are assets. So, improving the psychological immunity of armed forces personnel will help in handling the stress they experience every day during duty hours.

- It is always a challenging and important task to keep soldiers physically, psychologically, and emotionally fit. In this scenario, preventive as well as promotive measures become crucial to sustain good health in the armed forces. Improving the psychological immunity of armed forces personnel so that they can handle the stressors which they face in their job, easily and effectively has become a need.
- Yoga has emerged as an effective tool for therapeutic purposes in various physiological as well as psychological problems. The ultimate goal of yoga is to achieve a state of self-realization, but in-between the practice of yoga provides various health-related benefits. It creates harmony among the mind, body, and soul (Shivom & Verma S, 2020).

Methods

- **Participants:**

40 active armed forces personnel were selected from CRPF battalion 112 and 134 for the study.

- **Inclusion criteria:**

- Cadets should belong to Armed Forces.
- Active-duty armed forces personnel could be the part of the study
- Cadets who are willing to be a part of the study.
- Only male cadets could be the part of the study.
- Cadets from both, officers and soldiers.
- Cadets who are physically fit.

- **Exclusion criteria**

- Cadets who belong to the ‘services’ of the Armed Forces.
- Cadets who are not willing to participate in the study.
- Female cadets due to their meager representation.
- Cadets suffering from any physical problem.
- Cadets suffering from any clinical mental conditions.
- Cadets who belong to above and below the age range of 20-40 years old.

- **Study design**

Pre-test – Post-test Control Group Design

- **Tools**

Psycho-Immunity Scale; originally prepared by Bhardwaj et al. and adapted by the authors.

- **Intervention:**

Yogic intervention was received by the participants of the yoga group. A yogic module for improving psychological immunity was developed after deep study of some yogic texts. It is comprised of some specific *asanas*, *Pragyayogasana* (a series of 16 asanas), *pranayama* (controlled breathing), *bandha*, and *dhyana* (meditation). The yogic module thus developed was used for the intervention purpose. These procedures were given to the participants daily and each session lasted for 1 hour.

- **Data analysis:**

- Descriptive statistics was used for analysing the collected data.
- Paired t-test was used for analysing the data of within groups and independent sample t-test was calculated for analysing the data of between groups.
- Statistical significance for the data was set at $p < 0.05$.
- Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 was used for statistical analysis of the data (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

Results and Discussion

- The results of the study show that there is no significant difference between the experimental group (yoga group) and the control group in pre-condition regarding the overall psychological immunity and its four components (self-confidence, total adjustment, emotional maturity, and psychological well-being). Both the group are statistically equivalent.
- However, there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-condition of the yoga group regarding total PI and its four components (SC, TA, EM, and PWB) as well. While there is no significant difference in the pre and post-condition of the control group in overall PI and also in its all components.
- The result of the study reveals a very significant difference between the scores of yoga and the control group in post-condition regarding overall PI and in SC and PWB components of psychological immunity. Also, a significant difference between yoga and control group in post-condition was obtained regarding EM at 0.05 level. While there is no significant difference between the two groups regarding TA component of the psychological immunity. However, improvement in TA scores in yoga group is higher than the control group. The mean score of TA in yoga group is 59.95 and that of in control group is 57.65.

Conclusion

- The yoga intervention program significantly enhanced the level of psychological immunity of the armed forces personnel. The intervention program developed in this study can be applied to other populations also. The practice of yoga should be part of the training of the armed forces. It will enhance their overall functioning.

Thank You!