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EFFECT OF YOG NIDRA ON SLEEP PATTERN AND STRESS MANAGEMENT OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Anshuta Kiran Jadhav

ABSTRACT

Sleep disturbances are a common concern among children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), often exacerbating behavioral and cognitive challenges. This research examined the effects of Yoga Nidra on the sleep patterns of autistic children, exploring existing research and potential benefits. This study investigated the effect of Yog Nidra, a guided meditative relaxation technique, on the sleep patterns of autistic children. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving a sample of children diagnosed with ASD aged 6 to 12 years. Participants underwent a structured Yog Nidra intervention over a period of eight weeks, with sleep quality and patterns assessed pre- and post-intervention using both caregiver-reported sleep diaries and standardized sleep assessment tools. Results indicated a statistically significant improvement in sleep onset latency, total sleep duration, and reduction in nighttime awakenings. The findings suggest that Yog Nidra may serve as a beneficial non-pharmacological approach to enhancing sleep quality in children with autism, contributing positively to their overall well-being and daily functioning. Further research with larger samples and long-term follow-up is recommended to validate and expand upon these findings.

KEYWORDS: ASD, Yog Nidra, Sleep Pattern , Quality of Sleep

INTRODUCTION

The fast pace of modern life, with its constant changes and stresses, is impacting our health in many ways. From poor diet to lack of exercise and sleep, it seems like these habits are taking a toll. Autism, being a neurological condition, affects children from an early age and has seen increasing awareness in recent years. The rising prevalence is certainly a concern, and research like yours can provide valuable insights into how we can better support children with autism.

Sleep disturbances are commonly reported in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), affecting up to 80% of this population. These disturbances include difficulty falling asleep, frequent night awakenings, reduced total sleep time, and poor sleep quality. Disrupted sleep can exacerbate behavioral challenges,

reduce learning capacity, and contribute to heightened emotional dysregulation in children with ASD.

Yoga Nidra, also known as “yogic sleep,” is a guided relaxation practice rooted in the yogic tradition. It involves systematic relaxation of the body and mind while maintaining awareness, often practiced in a lying down position. Unlike sleep, Yoga Nidra keeps the mind in a deeply relaxed but conscious state, promoting parasympathetic activation and reducing hyperarousal—a key factor in sleep issues among neurodiverse children.

This study investigates the potential of Yoga Nidra as a non-invasive, accessible intervention to enhance sleep quality in autistic children. The focus is on exploring whether a consistent nightly Yoga Nidra practice can bring measurable

improvements in sleep onset, duration, and continuity, as observed by caregivers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- The main objective of this research is to see how the sleep time and quality of autistic children can be improved so that it calms their mind. This is a non-evasive therapy, with no side effects. So, it's essential to work on these lines along with the current therapies that are practiced.

Primary Objective:

- To assess the impact of Yog Nidra intervention on the sleep quality and patterns of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Secondary Objectives:

- To evaluate changes in sleep duration, latency (time taken to fall asleep), and frequency of night awakenings before and after Yog Nidra practice.
- To determine the effect of Yog Nidra on behavioral indicators related to sleep disturbances (e.g., restlessness, anxiety, bedtime resistance).
- To compare sleep-related outcomes between children practicing Yog Nidra and a control group receiving no intervention or standard care.
- To explore parents' or caregivers' observations regarding sleep improvements and daily functioning of the child post-intervention.
- To assess the feasibility, acceptability, and adherence to Yog Nidra sessions among autistic children and their families.

Scope and Limitations of the Research –

This research was done on only selected few children and they were made to listen yog Nidra everyday before sleeping. Out of all the yogic practices, yog Nidra was chosen to practice with them. Alongside their counselling, physiotherapy, medicines were continued as before. Without altering any daily schedule, yog Nidra was inculcated in their daily routine.

Sample -

For the study the centre chosen is Milestone Center with 31 parents are their wards were chosen. The sleep pattern before & after practicing yoga will be taken into consideration for the project and the change in

the subject.(children)

Beneficiaries of Yoga Nidra

Children and adults.

- Individuals with **stress-related disorders**.
- People with **neurological or developmental conditions**.
- Those suffering from **sleep disturbances**.
- Caregivers and healthcare professionals for self-care.

Scientific Backing

Studies have shown that Yoga Nidra can:

- Lower heart rate and blood pressure.
- Reduce stress and anxiety scores.
- Improve sleep architecture (REM and NREM balance).

Benefit	Effect
Stress Reduction	Lowers cortisol, induces calm
Sleep Improvement	Reduces insomnia, regulates sleep cycles
Emotional Healing	Helps process trauma, anxiety, and depression
Cognitive Support	Enhances focus, learning, and memory
Physical Relaxation	Eases muscle tension, improves immunity
Accessibility	Easy to practice, suitable for all ages and abilities

DATA ANALYSIS

A total of 30 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, aged between 6 and 16 years, were selected for the study. All participants were recruited through a special education center with parental consent.

Participants listened to a 20-minute guided Yoga Nidra audio session every night before bedtime for a duration of 4 weeks. The sessions were conducted in a quiet, familiar environment, their home and school.

To evaluate the effect of Yoga Nidra on the sleep quality of autistic children, a systematic statistical approach was adopted. The procedure involved both **quantitative analysis** and **qualitative observations**, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact.

Data Collection Tools

- **Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children (SDSC):** A standardized questionnaire used to assess multiple aspects of sleep disturbances, including difficulties in initiating and maintaining sleep, arousal disorders, and excessive somnolence.
- **Parental Sleep Diaries:** Daily logs maintained by parents to record bedtime, sleep onset time, night awakenings, and total sleep duration over the 4-week intervention period.

Anecdotal feedback from parents and caregivers was also reviewed to capture behavioral changes not fully reflected in quantitative data, such as ease of bedtime routines and reduction in bedtime resistance.

Pre-Test And Post-Test Data Presentation: On the basis of the Audio and Questionnaire Prepared following the were the parameters for conclusion.

- Sleeping Time of child in the night
- Awakening Time of Children
- Total Sleeping Hours of Children
- Number of Times Child Wakes Up In Night
- Concern About the Child Parent want to Share
- Child Goes to Sleep at the Same Time
- Child Falls Sleep within 20 Minutes, After Going to Bed
- Child Struggles at Bedtime (Cries, Refuses to Stay in Bed, Etc.)

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess the impact of Yoga Nidra on the sleep quality of autistic children. Based on the analysis of standardized sleep disturbance scores and parental observations over a 4-week intervention period, the findings indicate that Yoga Nidra significantly improves sleep quality among children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The present study concludes that Yog Nidra has a positive and measurable effect on the sleep patterns of children with autism. Through consistent practice, participants exhibited improvements in sleep onset, duration, and quality. The deep relaxation techniques involved in Yog Nidra appeared to reduce anxiety, promote calmness, and enhance the regulation of sensory processing factors that are often disrupted in autistic individuals and contribute to sleep disturbances.

These findings suggest that Yog Nidra can serve as a non-invasive, cost-effective, and holistic intervention to support better sleep hygiene in autistic children, ultimately contributing to improvements in their overall well-being, emotional regulation, and daily functioning. Future studies with larger sample sizes and long-term follow-ups are recommended to further validate these outcomes and explore the broader therapeutic benefits of Yog Nidra in neurodevelopmental disorders.

Key conclusions drawn from the study are as follows:

- There was a notable reduction in sleep disturbances as measured by the SDSC scores, indicating fewer issues related to falling asleep, staying asleep, and night awakenings.
- Sleep onset latency decreased, and overall sleep duration increased, suggesting better sleep efficiency after the intervention.
- Parental feedback supported the quantitative findings, with many reporting improved bedtime routines, calmer behavior before sleep, and reduced nighttime disruptions.

These findings underscore the potential of incorporating Yoga Nidra into therapeutic routines for children with autism, particularly for enhancing sleep—a functional component of their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development.

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