

Studies show significant benefits of yoga in 2 conditions

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Individuals with rheumatoid arthritis who practice yoga showed statistically significant improvements in disease activity, according to a small study presented today at the EULAR 2011 Annual Congress.

The results of the study conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) among 47 [patients](#) (26 [yoga](#) patients and 21 controls) demonstrate that patients who completed 12 sessions of Raj yoga which is one of the gentler styles of yoga, combining exercise and [breathing techniques](#) showed significant improvements in disease activity scores (DAS28) of $p=0.021$ and health assessment questionnaire's (HAQ) of $p=0.0015$. However there was no statistically significant improvement on the quality of life scale (QoL).

"Most patients with RA do not exercise regularly despite the fact that those who do report less pain and are therefore more physically active," said Dr Humeira Badsha MD Rheumatologist and founder of the Emirates Arthritis Foundation, Dubai, UAE. "While our study has been conducted in a small group of patients the results show clear benefits for patients who regularly practice Raj yoga. We believe that practicing yoga longer term could in fact result in further significant improvements and hope our study drives further research into the benefits of yoga in RA."

Patients were recruited by email through the Emirates Arthritis Foundation RA database (mean age of yoga group 44 years, mean age of control group 46.2 years, 80% female). Demographic data, [disease](#)

[activity](#) indices, health assessment questionnaire (HAQ) and SF-36 (a standard patient survey commonly used to calculate patient quality of life) were documented at enrolment and after completion of 12 sessions of yoga.

Results of a separate study show the positive effects of yoga on the quality of life in patients with Fibromyalgia, a long-term condition which causes extreme pain all over the body.

Results of one further study investigating the effects of yoga on the QoL of patients with [fibromyalgia](#), demonstrated that QoL scores, after an eight session classical yoga program which combines gentle yoga postures, breathing techniques and meditation, were better than scores obtained before the program (p

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