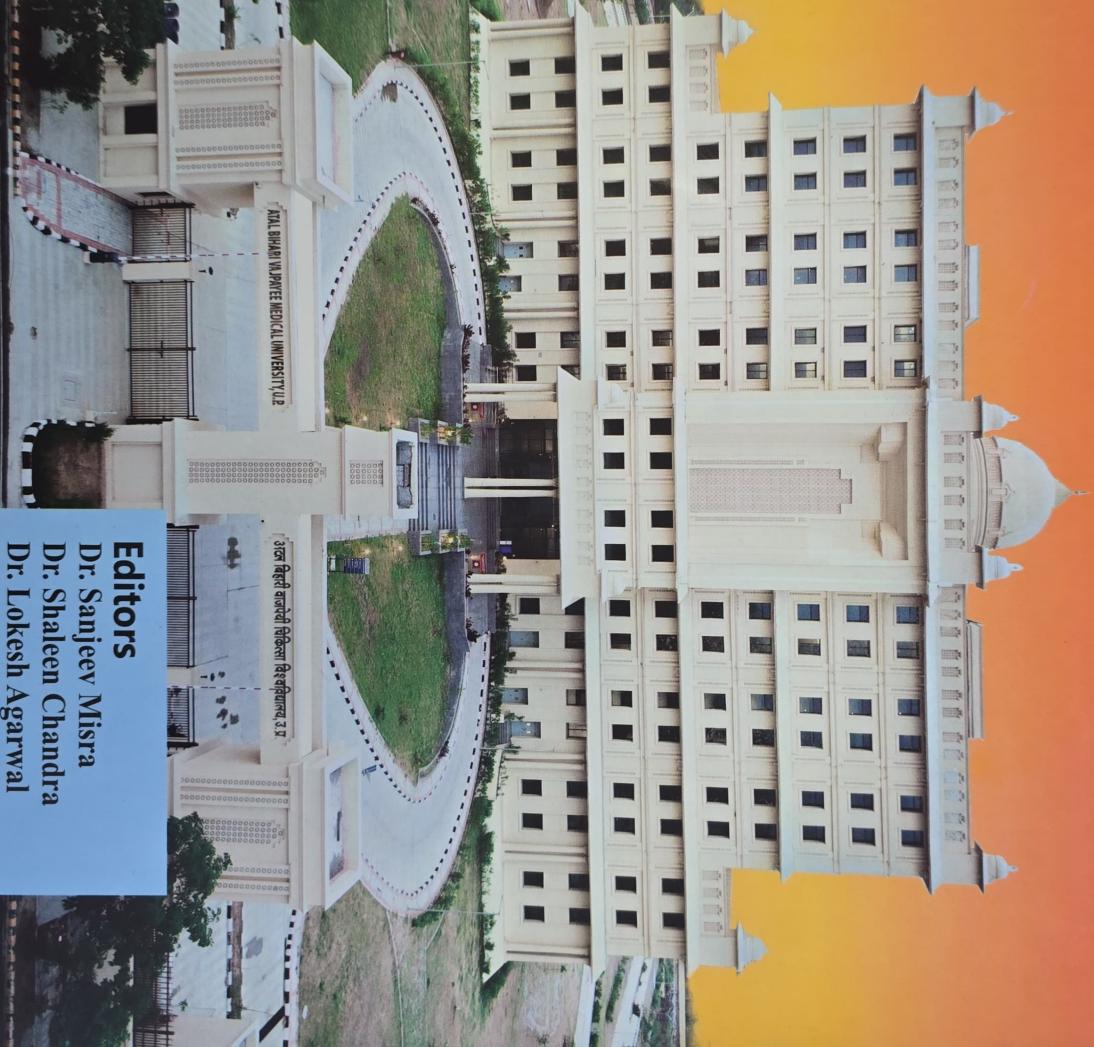


YOGA

IT'S ROLE IN HEALTH & DISEASE

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अंतर्राष्ट्रीय वैज्ञानिक शिक्षा विषयात्मक संस्था

Editors

- Dr. Sanjeev Misra
- Dr. Shaleen Chandra
- Dr. Lokesh Agarwal
- Dr. Ashok Kumar Bishnoi

YOGA A HOLISTIC ADJUNCT TO CONVENTIONAL CARE IN HEAD AND NECK CANCER A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF EVIDENCE AND APPLICATIONS

Dr. Shweta Singh,
Dr. Raju Chauhan,
Dr. Kunal Sah,
Dr. Kanak Tiwari,
Dr. Shiv Kumari Prajapati

Abstract

Head and neck cancer (HNC) poses substantial physical and psychological burdens due to the nature of the disease and the intensity of treatments such as surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. Yoga has emerged as a promising integrative therapy in oncology, aimed at improving quality of life, physical function, and emotional well-being. This review explores the mechanisms by which yoga may benefit HNC patients, evaluates clinical evidence across treatment and survivorship settings, and discusses delivery models, including dyadic approaches and telehealth. While early findings are encouraging, the field requires more standardized protocols and robust trials. Yoga's low-risk profile and adaptability position it as a feasible supportive intervention, warranting greater integration into comprehensive HNC care plans.

Keywords Head and Neck Cancer, Yoga, Integrative Oncology, Survivorship, Care & Support, Quality of Life.

Introduction

Over 900,000 new cases of head and neck cancers (HNCs), which include tumors of the salivary glands, pharynx, larynx, nasal cavity, and oral cavity, are reported each year, making them the sixth most frequent cancer globally. The use of tobacco and betel quid contributes significantly to the burden in India, where oral

cavity malignancies account for a sizable fraction of the disease. Although surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy are regularly used as part of standard treatment, they typically cause significant functional and psychological impairments even when they may be curative. The prevalence of symptoms such as dysphagia, xerostomia, trismus, pain, exhaustion, anxiety, and depression has a negative effect on long-term survivability outcomes and quality of life (QoL).

In this regard, including integrative and complementary medicines into cancer treatment is gaining popularity. In light of this, there is growing interest in incorporating integrative and complementary medicines into cancer treatment. Yoga, an age-old mind-body discipline that combines physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), and meditation techniques, has become well-known for its potential to help with stress relief, symptom management, and general wellness. Due to its multimodal character, yoga is especially well-suited to treating the intricate interactions between cognitive, emotional, and physical symptoms that cancer patients experience.

Yoga may provide significant advantages for HNC patients and survivors, including decreased treatment-related toxicity, better functional outcomes, improved mental health, and increased caregiver support, according to preliminary data from randomized controlled