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CAM In Review

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) includes a wide range of healing practices. These are among recently published research articles in this developing field, from The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, the leading scholarly journal in the field.

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Yoga Therapy May Aid Breathing for Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Pilot Study

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a debilitating condition characterized by difficulty breathing (dyspnea) found most often in the elderly and smokers. This pilot study randomized 29 participants, average age 69, to a 12-week yoga program specifically designed for people with COPD or usual-care control (UC). The primary outcomes, measured at baseline and at 12 weeks, were dyspnea intensity (DI) and dyspnea-related distress (DD). Secondary outcomes included physical performance, psychologic well-being, and quality of life. While yoga training had only small effects on DI after the 6-minute walk (6MW) test, there were greater reductions in DD in the yoga group compared to UC. Yoga training also improved 6MW distance. There were also small positive changes in muscle strength and quality of life.

Donesky-Cuenco D, Nguyen HQ, Paul S, Carrieri-Kohlman V. Yoga therapy decreases dyspnea-related distress and improves functional performance in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a pilot study. *J Altern Complement Med* 2009, 15(3): 225-234. doi:10.1089/acm.2008.0389.

Ginger Capsules Helpful for Dysmenorrhea and for Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy

Two randomized controlled trials conducted by Iranian researchers indicate that ginger is helpful for female disorders including painful menses and morning sickness during pregnancy. The study of dysmenorrhea, which followed 150 young women, found that those taking ginger experienced as much pain relief as others taking the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs ibuprofen or mefenamic acid. The study on nausea and vomiting followed 67 pregnant women experiencing these difficulties and found that symptoms decreased by 50% for the ginger group versus 9% for the control group.

Ozgoli G, Goli M, Moattar F. Comparison of Effects of Ginger, Mefenamic Acid, and Ibuprofen on Pain in Women with Primary Dysmenorrhea. *J Altern Complement Med*. Feb 13 2009.

Ozgoli G, Goli M, Simbar M. Effects of ginger capsules on pregnancy, nausea, and vomiting. *J Altern Complement Med*. Mar 2009;15(3):243-246.