Reviewer's report

Title: Yoga for patients with breast cancer: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 30 May 2012

Reviewer: Matthew J. Taylor, PT, PhD

Reviewer's report:

1. Major Compulsory Revisions: none
2. Minor Essential Revisions: page 9 "...1 article did assess neither quality of life nor psychological health but natural killer cell counts [37]..." eliminate the double negative for clarity (neither/nor)...unclear as written.

3. Discretionary Revisions: Not so much a revision as an observation of the process of review. The way the study is undertaken is technically correct but given that it is about yoga, I wonder if it might be good to be even more clear about how assumptions made in the criteria about what constitutes yoga ultimately bias the results, perpetuating a misunderstanding of yoga? Specifically p. 6, "3) Types of interventions. Studies that compared yoga with no treatment or any active treatment were eligible. Studies were excluded if yoga was not the main intervention but a part of a multimodal intervention, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction. Since in North America and Europe, physical exercise is perceived as a main component of yoga [10], studies examining yogic relaxation or meditation without physical component were not included in the review." So do we as researchers really want to say, "Well it appears we misunderstand what yoga really is (asana being a small portion of the rich practice) and since we've been doing that, let's just continue in our reporting because it would confuse the western reading audience."?

MBSR is called MBSR for precisely this reason from Jon Kabat-Zinn's comments vs Buddhism/Yoga/Meditation, and yet the practice consists of at least 5 of the 8 limbs of yoga. So we shouldn't include it because of the label?

From an axiological perspective (what research is worth doing), my personal concern is by presenting the data the way it is, we miss an important opportunity to inform the readership and future researchers about what yoga really is and the inherent bias/misrepresentation of what yoga is. And what would the results be if we chose not to misrepresent yoga as exercise (asana), but did include the relaxation (savasana being the "king" of asana) and MBSR being technically what yoga is with asana, concentration, non-reactivity, meditation, and a self reflection on the niyamas/yamas?

So that's my concern and I hope this platform of inclusion of reviewers comments
might spark further reflection by not only the authors, but those in the future that access this article. Thank you.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests