Author's response to reviews

Title: Yoga for schizophrenia: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to the Editor’s and the Reviewer’s comments:

Dear editor, dear reviewers,

Thank you very much again for your valuable comments which we address subsequently. Changes are highlighted in grey.

Reply to reviewer 1:

1. The authors addressed appropriately the concerns of the different reviewers. I do recommend this paper for publication in BMC Psychiatry.

HC: Thanks a lot for your kind comments.

Reply to reviewer 2:

1. The revised manuscript reads much better and I congratulate the authors.

HC: Thank you very much.

2. Minor revision: In the sentence "In studies that used short (less than 3 weeks) yoga interventions were used" (page 13 last para), "were used" may be deleted.

HC: The typo has been corrected.

Reply to reviewer 3:

1. Major compulsory revisions: I continue to have concern as to whether the reporting of the cognitive function data in meta analytic form is helpful to readers, especially those with only a passing knowledge of meta analysis. It is based on one study and is strictly speaking not a meta analysis, rather it is a reporting of an effect size with a Confidence interval (www-users.york.ac.uk/~mb55/msc/systrev/week6/meta_text.pdf). Recommendations for conducting meta analyses state that a minimum of two studies are needed for meta analysis (Botella, J., Gambara H., 2006, Doing and reporting a meta-analysis, International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology, 6, 425 – 440; Davey, J., Turner, RM., Clarke, MJ., Higgins, JPT. Characteristics of meta-analyses and their component studies in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews: a cross-sectional, descriptive analysis, BMC Medical Research Methodology, 2011, 11, 160 doi:10.1186/1471-2288-11-160). I recommend this plot is removed from the results and the authors report within the text that cognitive function was only reported in one study (then include Effect size and confidence interval), thus few conclusions can be drawn regarding effect of yoga on cognitive disorganization symptoms.

HC: As outlined in your second reference, the forest plot on cognitive function should not be regarded as a meta-analysis. It was included because the original publication on this study did not include a group comparison and did therefore not allow drawing conclusions on the presented data. As we agree that the way of presentation might confuse those readers that are not familiar with meta-analyses, we followed your helpful suggestions and now present SMDs and CIs in the text as results from 1 single study. We applied the same strategy to “quality of life” when comparing yoga to exercise and to the subgroup analyses.
2. There are not 10 studies in this meta analysis so funnel plots would presumably not have been informative. How did the authors review publications bias? This is pertinent, as we have a meta analysis with few studies, reporting no significant effect of the treatment condition, therefore the file drawer problem/publication bias is relevant here. Could the authors revise this section to clarify their methods here?

HC: The visual analysis was originally planned in the review protocol. In order to be as precise as possible when disclosing the original protocol, this section was added in the methods section. As in the results section, we have now added a statement in the methods that this analysis could not be performed due to the small number of eligible studies. We have added potential publication bias as a limitation.

3. I would suggest that the authors highlight somewhere in the limitations section of the discussion that the effect size estimates derived in the meta analysis are also highly unstable due to the small number of studies.

HC: The limitation has been added.

Reply to reviewer 4:

1. The authors have answered the queries of reviewers. Though I am not confident about statistical aspect of meta analysis, overall the manuscript is acceptable for publishing.

HC: Thanks a lot.

Once again, we would like to thank the editor and the reviewers for their efforts, encouraging comments and constructive criticism.

Sincerely yours,

Holger Cramer

(on behalf of the authors)