Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of yoga use among internal medicine patients

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Reviewer: Erik Groessl

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting study of the predictors of yoga use among internal medicine patients in Germany. The sample is sizable, and this is an important question because yoga is being increasingly prescribed and/or provided in internal medicine settings. However, the questions about yoga are rather limited, and the data is almost 10 years old, so implications may be limited as yoga use has been changing rapidly in many developed countries. Some gauge of how much yoga these people had done and when they have done it would be very useful but appears to not be available. The questions asks whether they have ever done yoga, so many people may have tried yoga once in their lifetime, possibly 30 years prior but would answer yes and try to rate helpfulness.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In the Introduction, it states that “The analysis was based on the health locus of control construct [16] that describes health behavior as a function of control beliefs…” LOC was measured as a predictor but it is not clear why the measurement of this variable would guide analysis.

2. It would help to explain more about the origination of the yoga use questions. Were the questions developed by the authors of this manuscript? Or were the data collected as part of another effort and simply analyzed by the current researchers?

3. In general, the yoga use questions seem quite limited in the information they provide. What about dose of yoga or type of yoga?

4. The two dichotomous response choices do not seem optimal when considering measurement principles and guidelines. Is there any mutual exclusivity? Can someone say it is helpful and harmful? helpful (yes, no) and harmful (yes, no).

5. Discussion – The 2nd paragraph of discussion states these rates are higher than “the general population” but the studies referenced are from the US. Is there any data showing comparable rates in Germany and the US?

6. Could you comment in the discussion on whether high internal LOC is correlated with low either of the external LOCs or whether they are truly independent? Can one have high internal and high external LOC at the same time?

7. The discussion of limitations states that results from the single-center study may “only apply to German internal medicine patients.” However, because the
study is a single-center, can it represent all of Germany? More detail on the clinic studied and very brief background on the structure of German healthcare could help international readers understand the generalizability of results.

8. Two important limitations of the data were not discussed but should be. The data is almost 10 years old data, so readers will wonder whether yoga use has changed in Germany since 2001-04? Also, there appears to be no assessment of the frequency or duration of yoga practice. Predicting ongoing usage or enough sufficient to produce an effect would be more informative.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Page 5: A word seems to be missing – “Those patients that reported to have used yoga were queried helpfulness:”

Page 5 – same sentence: the question “How helpful did you perceive yoga to cope with your current main disease?” does not read very well and might be re-worded.

Results section states that headache was associated with less yoga use, yet Table 1 seems to indicate higher yoga use in those with headache.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.