Reviewer’s report

Title: Strategies for Evaluating Self-Efficacy and Observed Success in the Practice of Yoga Postures for Therapeutic Indications: Methods from a Yoga Intervention for Urinary Incontinence among Middle-aged and Older Women

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Reviewer: Lisa Uebelacker

Reviewer's report:

This article presents results from three novel yoga-related assessments: self-efficacy for particular postures, observer-rated competence for those postures, and self-efficacy for completing home yoga practice. I really appreciate that the authors are developing new measures to assess aspects of yoga practice. Developers of yoga interventions may want to directly target these aspects of yoga - e.g., in a yoga intervention, one might want to increase self-efficacy for home practice, and thus (hopefully) increase amount of quality of home practice. However, I struggled with some of the details of the assessments that they created.

1. First, do the authors have hypotheses about how these three constructs (self-efficacy for postures, expert observed competence, self-efficacy for homework) SHOULD be related to important outcomes, such as efficacy of a yoga intervention? Why might these constructs be important? For example, how could increased self-efficacy for postures translate into better clinical outcomes? Why might observer rated competency be related to clinical outcomes? Are there certain clinical health outcomes for which observer-rated competency might be particularly important?

2. Did authors have a priori hypotheses about how these three constructs should relate to each other?

3. Participants were asked to rate their confidence that they could HOLD a yoga pose for 30 seconds. In contrast, the yoga therapist was asked to rate participants' competence in performing a pose; nothing was said about the length of time. Because instructions differ, participants may have been thinking about something different than what the yoga therapist was thinking about when rating a pose. This could account for the lack of correlation. Did the authors intend to be assessing the same construct from both a participant and observer perspective?

4. Please provide more information about what criteria the yoga therapist used to rate "success in performing" a posture. Did they look at proper alignment according to the Iyengar style? Did they look at breath practice while holding the pose? Did they look at length of time the pose was hold? What if the participant had proper alignment but held her breath and had a grimace on her face? Related, was the yoga therapist an expert specifically in Iyengar yoga?

5. Further, styles of yoga vary, but in many styles, the internal experience of the participant as being present in the moment and in their body is at least important, if not more important, as the outer form. The primary concern with form might be that the person not be using an alignment that could hurt themselves. In fact, many teachers emphasize that how things look is not important compared to one's internal experience. Thus, this emphasis on external form, although perhaps consistent with Iyengar style, may not be nearly as relevant or even desired in other styles of yoga.

6. If authors want to present Yoga posture self-efficacy and expert observed competency as single scales, they should provide relevant psychometrics as well (e.g., alpha).

7. Discussion: given that mean self-confidence ratings only ranged from 3.6 to 4.7 on a 1-5 scale, it might not be accurate to say they "varied substantially."

8. Conclusions: given these results, I’m not sure how much can be concluded about these particular measures. I certainly don't think they are ready for widespread use; they certainly require more study.
Authors do not assess reliability, and there is minimal convergent validity.

9. In the methods section, authors report that they examined correlations between scores on the three main scales and selected demographic and clinical characteristics. Yet, in Table 5, they list coefficients rather than correlations. Please clarify and make consistent.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

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