



Barriers, motivators, and long-term adherence to yoga versus aerobic/strengthening exercises in older adults with knee osteoarthritis

Corjena Cheung

Hong Kong Adventist College, Hong Kong

Abstract

Statement of the Problem: Exercise such as aerobic/strength exercises (ASE) and Hatha yoga are recommended for optimal management of knee osteoarthritis (OA). While there is information on their short-term benefits, little is known about long-term adherence and factors that affect it.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This qualitative study assessed barriers and motivators to long-term adherence of an 8-week yoga versus ASE program for knee OA. Twenty-eight older adults (mean age: 71 years) participated in five semi-structured focus group interviews 12 months post-intervention. Transcript-based qualitative content analysis approach was used.

Findings: Although the adherence rate during the 8-week intervention programs was $\geq 50\%$, adherence to the prescribed level of yoga or ASE regimen (30 minutes/day, 5 days/week) during the 1-year follow-up was poor and episodic. The majority of participants incorporated only selected poses/ASE learned in class into their own exercise habit. Participants in the yoga group reported experiencing mind-body benefits which motivated them to practice: reduced knee pain and swelling, improved muscle tone, increased flexibility, better stress coping, and more relaxation. Additional motivators include having a routine and family support. Caretaker responsibility, lack of structure, unsure of accuracy of poses, time constraints, and health issues prevented participants from practicing yoga independently. Pain avoidance, improving muscle strengths, weight loss, and stress reduction were the key motivators of ASE. Participants in the ASE group reported competing interests on time from family and life events, injuries and health issues, and depressed moods were the main exercise barriers. Practical and attitudinal strategies for adherence were making an activity list to ability and preference, and self-monitoring.

Conclusion & Significance: Most participants attempted to remain active and incorporated some elements of the intervention into their regular exercise regimens; however, none adhered to the full program or recommended levels.

Information on exercise barriers and strategies for long-term adherence can inform future OA exercise intervention studies.

Biography

Corjena Cheung received her doctoral and post-doctoral trainings at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing, USA. Dr. Cheung is currently a professor at Hong Kong Adventist College and a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. A nurse educator and researcher, Dr. Cheung is passionate about improving the health and well-being of older adults. She has conducted a number of randomized controlled trials and qualitative studies on the use of complementary and integrative therapies for managing symptoms, promoting physical activity, preventing disability, and improving quality of life in community dwelling older adults with chronic health conditions specifically knee osteoarthritis and Parkinson's disease. Through her scholarly activities, she has built a strong foundation for research and scholarship in her area of interest. She has published over 25 articles and presented research findings in both regional and international professional conferences.



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