

Perceptions of yoga as a healthcare staff wellbeing intervention: A mixed methods survey of UK healthcare workers

Lucy Doyle (presenting), Dr Tom Nadarzynski, Prof John
Golding, Dr Tina Cartwright

Background and Rationale

- Despite established positive wellbeing-related impacts of yoga for HCWs, there is limited research on perceptions and acceptability of yoga as a wellbeing intervention for UK HCWs
- This is important as it will **impact uptake and adherence** – and ultimately success - of interventions in practice
- Particularly important to look at factors impacting feasibility and sustainability of yoga interventions for HCWs as these are already gaining traction in the NHS



Research questions

The analysis of data provided in this survey is guided by several research questions:

What impacts the uptake and feasibility of yoga interventions by UK HCWs?

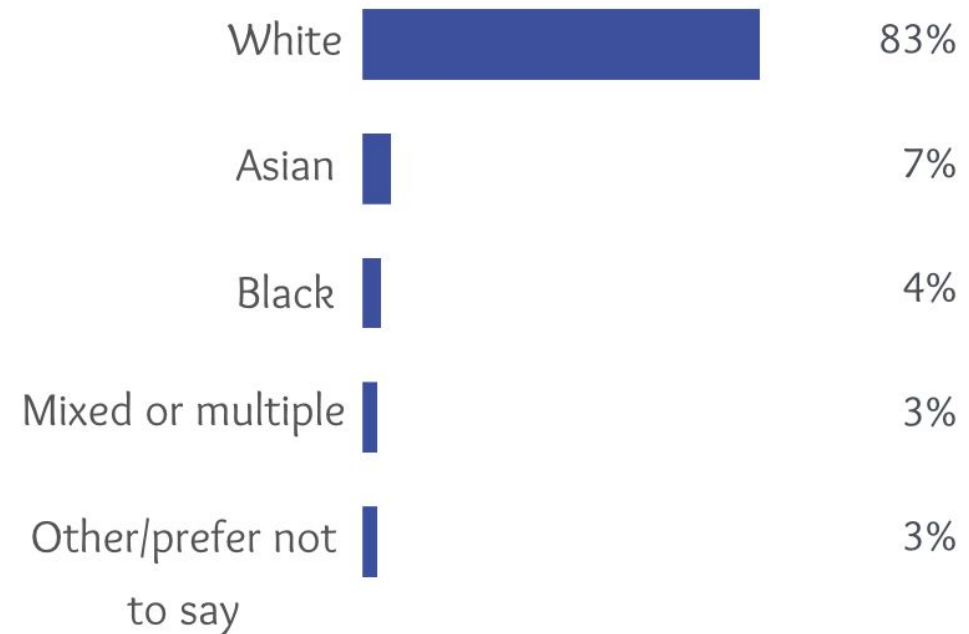
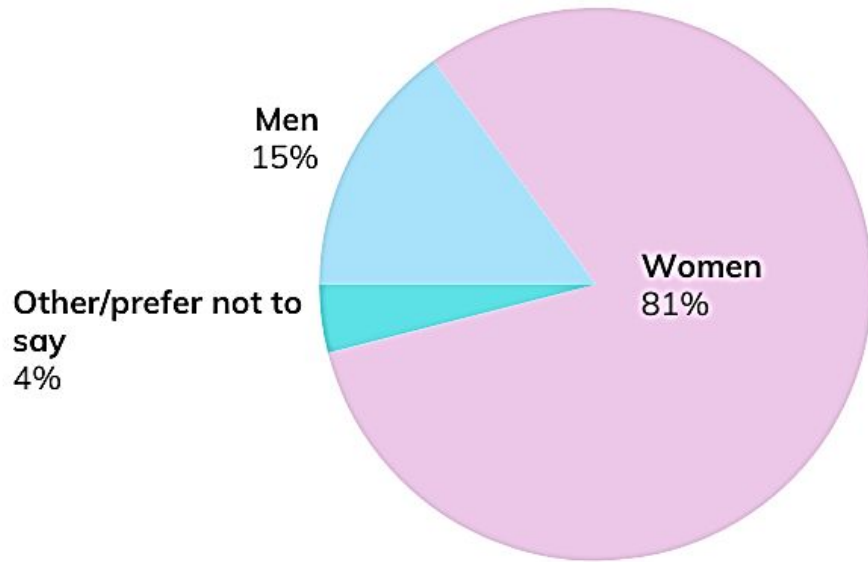
How do UK HCWs feel about the use of yoga as an activity to support their wellbeing?

What are the key perceived benefits, barriers, and facilitators to participation in workplace yoga interventions amongst this group?

Methods

- Online self-report survey of UK based healthcare workers (HCWs) distributed via Qualtrics
- Mix of self-report scales and open-ended questions focused around ***wellbeing, experiences with organizational wellbeing support, and perceptions and experience of yoga as a wellbeing intervention***
- **341** complete responses received

Demographics



- Mean age 38.34 years (SD 11.40)
- 87% working in England
- Just under half the sample were in the nursing/midwifery sector

Qualitative analysis

284 open-ended responses from four free text questions on:

- *Experiences with general wellbeing support in organization (e.g., which services found most/least helpful)*
- *Reasons for answer to hypothetical question relating to likelihood of participating in an existing 6-week workplace yoga intervention if offered opportunity (Yoga4NHS)*
- *Experiences of those who have participated in Yoga4NHS before*
- *General comments on survey*

Initial themes

Theme 1: Critical deciding factors

Theme 2: Perceived limitations
and drawbacks to yoga
interventions

Theme 3: Facilitators to
participation and ongoing practice

Theme 4: Barriers impact both
implementation and participation

Theme 1: Critical deciding factors

time, cost, flexibility of programme

“I would need the course to be funded externally or by my workplace”

“BUT I NEED TO BE GIVEN THE TIME TO ATTEND IT”

“Depends what times, if in own time and no time set duration (if it's 1hr, I won't be doing it because after a day's work, I'll have dinner and go [to] bed”

“...online classes would need to be accessed anytime rather than specific times”



Theme 2: Limitations and drawbacks

yoga can become 'just another commitment'

"If I spend time at work exercising then I can't complete patient care and my waiting list grows longer"

"Nobody is going to stay late at work because they spent time doing yoga"

"I have to go home on time as I have commitments there that need my attention e.g., dog and children"



Theme 2: Limitations and drawbacks

'extra-curricular' interventions can widen inequalities between staff groups

“Despite the many wellbeing programmes on offer, it’s **impossible** for front line staff to attend as they’re always scheduled at traditional lunch times. This **excludes** patient facing staff due to time restraints or allocated breaks [that] fall **outside the traditional lunch time**”

“The yoga classes provided by the Trust were aimed primarily at office and admin staff”

“it was virtually **impossible** to attend the yoga classes that my trust offered...as they were held at 17:30 which was during shift hours”

“I am lucky because my job is 8am to 4pm so it allows me to go to yoga in the evenings. **I feel for my colleagues on the wards though as they are not able to take advantage of these offerings**”

Theme 2: Limitations and drawbacks

'Individual-focused' interventions divert from organisational issues

“it feels rather like a **“papering over the cracks”** situation”



“...I’m not stressed because I lack resilience, I’m stressed because we’re short-staffed and overworked.”

“If my Trust offered yoga, I would feel like they were investing in the health and wellbeing of staff”

But...perceived intention matters?



“They only care about getting you back to work not addressing underlying issues” **[not yoga-specific]**

Theme 3: Facilitators and motivators

Motivation from potential wellbeing benefits

“I think it would be a great way to teach us to be mindful”

“Would like to improve my fitness and potentially take up a new hobby as feel this could be good for both mental and physical health”

“Really helped me with a back problem I had been experiencing due to poor posture and an unsuitable desk”

“Yoga for me is key to retaining flexibility as one ages”



Theme 3: Facilitators and motivators

Potential integration into job [as a facilitator and motivator]

“Having a session such as yoga offered **as part of the working week** through work would be really beneficial”

“Supporting yoga as part of CPD* would make it **easier to access**/make time for”

“CPD hours would be useful for revalidation, I would definitely attend”

“I tend to suggest Yoga with Adrienne to patients if appropriate”



Theme 4: Barriers impact both implementation and participation

Person-focused barriers/perceived capability

"I have a physical disability and would struggle immensely with this"



"I find slower types of yoga, and pilates much better. I'm not supposed to do most yoga as my joints are very unstable and frequently dislocate"

Theme 4: Barriers impact both implementation and participation

Limited appeal

“I would have preferred the Yoga4NHS to be in person personally”

“I prefer my yoga/wellbeing practices to be separate from my work”

“Yoga causes more physical damage than it resolves”

“[yoga4nhs] was a bit basic for me”

“This [yoga4nhs] does not sound like an appropriate allocation of CPD points”

“I’m used to practicing a faster paced more active/exercise form of yoga”

Theme 4: Barriers impact both implementation and participation

Theoretical benefits versus reality

“As a yoga [teacher] I would love to offer such a course if I was trained, yet **sadly the standard answer is no time and staff that aren’t interested [and] have in the past resented those staff that have attended wellness sessions as they have to provide cover for them!**”

“Some community-funded yoga was offered to clinical staff only. **I did ask about the possibility of allied health professionals getting something similar, but there was no funding**”

“No allowance in NHS budget to fund this unfortunately in our workplace although the benefit would support in reducing staff stress and sickness levels”

“Very simply, until healthcare workers who are practicing healthcare change their own practice of symptom management to lifestyle management and lead by example..then very simply expecting staff to join a lifestyle management programme like yoga is not going to happen”

Quantitative analysis: Perceptions of **benefits** of workplace yoga

I believe yoga offered by my workplace would...

Statement	% agreeing (n=214)
Improve my physical health	88%
Improve my mental health	82%
Reduce my stress levels	73%



How will the results of this study be used?

- The quantitative and qualitative results from this survey will also be used to inform an upcoming feasibility study exploring the impact of the Yoga4NHS intervention on several wellbeing-related outcomes for UK healthcare workers

*If your workplace was to design a new programme/activity to support staff wellbeing, which of the following outcomes would you like it to address? Choose as many as apply**

