



MediYoga: Another way of being in the world A phenomenological study from the perspective of persons suffering from stress-related symptoms

The prevalence of stress-related illness has grown in recent years. Many of these patients seek help in primary health care. Yoga can reduce stress and thus complements pharmacological therapy in medical practice. To our knowledge, no studies have investigated patients' experiences of yoga treatment in a primary health care setting or, specifically, the experiences of yoga when suffering from stress-related illness. Thus, the aim of the present study was to explore the meaning of participating in MediYoga as a complementary treatment for stress-related symptoms and diagnosis in a primary health care setting. This study has a descriptive phenomenological design and took place at a primary health care centre in Sweden during 2011. Five women and one man (43_51 years) participated. They were recruited from the intervention group (n_18) in a randomized control trial, in which they had participated in a MediYoga group in addition to standard care for 12 weeks. Data were collected by means of qualitative interviews, and a phenomenological data analysis was conducted. The essential meaning of the MediYoga experience was that the MediYoga was not an endpoint of recovery but the start of a process towards an increased sense of wholeness. It was described as a way of alleviating suffering, and it provided the participants with a tool for dealing with their stress and current situation on a practical level. It led to greater self-awareness and self-esteem, which in turn had an implicit impact on their lifeworld. In phenomenological terms, this can be summarized as Another way of being in the world, encompassing a perception of deepened identity. From a philosophical perspective, due to using the body in a new way (yoga), the participants had learnt to see things differently, which enriched and recast their perception of themselves and their lives.