Abstract

Musculoskeletal Pain Reported By Dental Hygiene Students And Their Perceptions Of Yoga As A MSD Intervention

**Purpose:** Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are a significant occupational issue among Dental Hygienists and recent research suggests that undergraduate students are also prone to MSDs (Hayes et al, 2014 article). Complementary Alternative Therapy (CAM) approaches to mitigating MSDs, including yoga, have shown to relieve MSD related pain. While some studies have examined CAM therapy among practicing hygienists, no studies have examined the implementation of yoga within the dental hygiene student population. The purpose of this study was to determine if dental hygiene students experience MSD related pain, their current engagement in yoga (formal or informal); and if they would consider regular yoga practice as a MSD intervention.

**Methods:** Senior dental hygiene students (N=24) were surveyed to establish their existing pain (severity and location) and assess their current practices and beliefs regarding yoga. A survey research design was used in this study and IRB approval was obtained.

**Results:** Limitations to incorporating yoga into a regular routine included the belief it would be too time consuming (52%) with others citing they had no access to a yoga class, the cost or other factors. Pain (low) assessment was reported most frequently in the head & neck region by 15 of the students.

**Conclusion:** This study suggests that most students reported low, moderate or severe pain in one or more areas of the upper body. Further, incorporating yoga into the curriculum may address the primary limitation of students to incorporate yoga into routine practice.

**Keywords:** MSD, Yoga, Complementary Alternative Therapy