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## Yoga for Patients Undergoing Thoracic Radiotherapy and their Family Caregivers: Results of a Randomized Controlled Trial

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**BACKGROUND:** Patients with advanced thoracic cancers undergoing standard radiotherapy (RT) have a high risk of experiencing performance declines and poor quality of life (QOL). Exercise programs may improve objective and subjective performance; yet adherence remains poor. Including family caregivers as active intervention participants may improve adherence and thus efficacy. Thus, this clinical trial seeks to examine the efficacy of a patient-caregiver dyadic yoga intervention relative to a dose-matched education/support intervention.

**METHODS:** Patients with lung or esophageal cancer undergoing at least 5 weeks of RT and their family caregivers were randomized to either a 15-session yoga or education/support (ES) comparison intervention. Patients and caregivers were assessed at baseline (T1), the last day of RT (T2) and 1 (T3), 2 (T4) and 3 (T5) months later. Patients completed the 6-minute walk test (6MWT; primary outcome) and both patients and caregivers completed a validated QOL measure (secondary outcomes).

**RESULTS:** A total of 222 participants were randomized. For the 6MWT, patients in the yoga group performed significantly better than those in the ES group across T2-T5 (least squared means (LSMs) in meters: yoga=469 vs. ES=441,  $P=.03$ ). Patients in the yoga group also reported improved physical (LSMs: yoga=44.7 vs. ES=41.6,  $P=.03$ ) but not mental QOL scores across T2-T5 compared with those in the ES group. As exploratory outcomes, patients in the yoga group also reported improved sleep ( $P=.01$ ) and coping efficacy ( $P=.02$ ).

**CONCLUSIONS:** Yoga significantly improves functional capacity and subjective physical QOL in patients undergoing thoracic RT. Involving a family caregiver may improve intervention adherence.

### Keywords

Yoga, 6-minute walk test, thoracic cancers, radiotherapy

### Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

### Abstract submitters declaration

yes

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