

Delivering chair yoga in care homes: a qualitative study of the experience of residents and staff

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Introduction: The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the views of elderly care home residents and care home staff on the usefulness of accessible chair yoga as a well-being intervention after the residents had taken part in an accessible chair yoga intervention.

Methods: Residents recruited from two care homes in the UK took part in the chair yoga intervention that consisted of twice weekly 30- 45-minute Lakshmi Voelker Chair Yoga™ sessions delivered over eight weeks in the care home. Participants included those with cognitive impairments ranging from mild to severe on the Addenbrooke's Cognition Examination (ACE III). Focus Groups with chair yoga participants were conducted at the end of the 8 weeks. Face-to-face semi-structured inter- views were also conducted with members of staff who had close contact with those participants during the 8 weeks.

Results: Transcript data was thematically analysed from 17 residents who participated in at least 55% of the chair yoga sessions (average attendance 80.5%). Emerging themes revealed that chair yoga provided: a strong sense of social inclusion; pro-social behaviour and a sense of purpose; enjoyment; mental and physical stimulation; and relaxation. Interviews with 3 Engagement Lead members of staff indicated the length of the sessions and content was appropriate, but that one-to-one sessions might be more suitable for those with more severe dementia.

Conclusions: Based on opinions expressed by participants in the focus groups and interviews with staff, chair yoga is a feasible well-being activity for elderly care home residents, including those with dementia. This relatively simple and stimulating well-being activity was useful in providing residents with a sense of purpose, enjoyment, and relaxation in a sociable manner.

Key words: Yoga, well-being, social inclusion, dementia, care home, qualitative

doi: 10.1016/j.eujim.2021.102079

European Journal of Integrative Medicine 48 (2021) 101736