

THE EFFECT OF POSTNATAL YOGA INTENSITY ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF POSTPARTUM MOTHERS

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ABSTRAK: PENGARUH INTENSITAS POSTNATAL YOGA TERHADAP KESEHATAN MENTAL IBU NIFAS

Latar Belakang: Perubahan fisik, hormonal, dan emosional yang terjadi pada masa ini sering kali mempengaruhi kesehatan mental ibu. Aktivitas fisik dapat mengurangi stres dan meningkatkan kesehatan. Ibu nifas sangat rentan terjadi gangguan psikologis karena adanya perubahan peran dan tanggung jawab. Gangguan psikologis yang tidak dikelola maka akan berdampak buruk terhadap ibu nifas. Dalam upaya menjaga keseimbangan mental selama masa nifas, berbagai pendekatan telah dikembangkan, salah satunya adalah melalui aktivitas fisik seperti yoga.

Tujuan: untuk mengetahui pengaruh intensitas postnatal yoga terhadap kesehatan mental ibu nifas

Metode: Desain penelitian ini menggunakan desain quasi experimental dengan menggunakan model nonequivalent control group design. Instrumen penelitian kuesioner Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. Teknik pengumpulan data adalah memberikan kuesioner sebagai pretest pada responden pada hari pertama pertemuan, kemudian selama 2 minggu responden mengikuti postnatal yoga, selanjutnya responden mengisi kuesioner sebagai posttest pada responden pada hari terakhir pertemuan.

Hasil: Secara statistik didapatkan P-value = 0,000 (<0,05). Terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik antara skor kesehatan mental ibu nifas sebelum (Pretest) dan sesudah (Posttest) diberikan Terapi Yoga Postnatal.

Kesimpulan: Terapi Yoga Postnatal terbukti sangat efektif secara signifikan dalam mengurangi tingkat gejala depresi pascapersalinan (menurunkan skor EPDS) pada kelompok ibu nifas.

Saran: Disarankan perlu penelitian lanjutan tentang minat, motivasi dan faktor penghambat ibu nifas dalam mengikuti postnatal yoga.

Kata Kunci : Ibu Nifas, Kesehatan Mental, Postnatal, Yoga

ABSTRACT

Background: Physical, hormonal, and emotional changes that occur during this time often affect a mother's mental health. Physical activity can reduce stress and improve health. Postpartum mothers are highly vulnerable to psychological disorders due to changes in roles and responsibilities. Psychological disorders that are not managed can have negative effects on postpartum mothers. In efforts to maintain mental balance during the postpartum period, various approaches have been developed, one of which is through physical activities such as yoga.

Purpose: to determine the effect of postnatal yoga intensity on the mental health of postpartum mothers

Methods: This research design uses a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group design model. Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) research questionnaire instrument. The data collection technique involved administering the questionnaire as a pretest to respondents on the first day of the meeting, then the respondents participated in postnatal yoga for 2 weeks, and finally, the respondents completed the questionnaire as a posttest on the last day of the meeting.

Results: Statistically, a P-value of 0.000 (<0.05). There is a statistically significant difference between the mental health scores of postpartum mothers before (Pretest) and after (Posttest) receiving Postnatal Yoga Therapy.

Conclusion: Postnatal Yoga Therapy has been proven to be significantly effective in reducing the level of postpartum depression symptoms (lowering EPDS scores) in the group of postpartum mothers.

Suggestions; It is recommended that further research be conducted on the interests, motivations, and inhibiting factors for postpartum mothers in participating in postnatal yoga.

Keywords: : Mental Health, Postpartum Mothers, Postnatal, Yoga

INTRODUCTION

The puerperium, or postnatal period, represents a critical transition in a woman's life following childbirth. The accompanying physical, hormonal, and emotional changes often significantly impact the mother's mental health. Many postpartum mothers experience mood disturbances, ranging from baby blues and anxiety to more severe postpartum depression (PPD). If these conditions are inadequately managed, the negative consequences can extend to the mother, the infant, and the overall family dynamic (Nabilla & Dwiyantri, 2022).

The discomfort experienced by women is largely attributable to physiological and psychological changes in their body. Psychological discomfort during pregnancy includes anxiety, sleep disturbances, and antenatal depression. Conversely, psychological discomfort during the postpartum period includes postpartum depression, baby blues, and others. Anxiety is one of the most common discomforts, affecting nearly all pregnant women, with approximately 18.2% experiencing anxiety during gestation (Malinda, 2024; Munns et al., 2024).

Anxiety and stress can have several detrimental effects on the body, potentially escalating into chronic conditions if left untreated (Lestari & Friscila, 2022). Psychological stress has been linked to damaging effects on the immune system, while anxiety is associated with conditions like coronary heart disease, reduced quality of life, and suicidal behavior (Ariyanti et al., 2023). Postpartum depression (PPD) is the most common psychological distress in the postpartum period, a serious mental disorder considered one of the most significant and frequently encountered issues. The reported prevalence of PPD historically ranges from 10% to 15%. PPD symptoms typically manifest as a combination of sadness, anhedonia, irritability, and decreased self-esteem (Ariasih et al., 2023). PPD is a health concern affecting approximately 13% of women within one year of giving birth. Various contributing factors include antenatal depression, stress related to childcare, life pressures, social support, anxiety during pregnancy, marital satisfaction, history of previous depression, infant temperament, baby blues, low self-esteem, and unplanned pregnancy (Fadiyah, 2024; Sumantri & Budiyantri, 2017).

In the effort to maintain mental equilibrium during the puerperium, various approaches have been developed, notably physical activities such as yoga. Postnatal yoga is known to offer benefits for the mother's physical and psychological health, including reducing stress, improving sleep quality,

enhancing mood, and strengthening the mother-infant bond (Maolinda et al., 2025). Physical activity is well-established for reducing stress and promoting overall health. Yoga is commonly employed as a stress management therapy involving the entire human body (Aulya et al., 2023; Hasanah et al., 2024; Lestari & Friscila, 2023).

Insufficient time for exercise in postpartum mothers can significantly impact their mental health. Physical activity is known to play a crucial role in the release of endorphins, hormones that enhance mood and alleviate stress (Angin, Zahri1. Angin ZP, Tarigan IP, Hasibuan IHY, Surbakti JP, Sihombing RC et al., 2025; Lesser et al., 2023). When opportunities for exercise are reduced or eliminated, postpartum women face a higher risk of developing various mental health issues. In addition to time constraints, other factors such as physical fatigue due to sleep deprivation and the process of postpartum recovery also act as barriers to engaging in exercise (Amna & Khairani, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted at Independent Midwifery Practice (TPMB) facilities within the East Banjarmasin Sub-district area between May-August 2025.

The study employed a quantitative research approach. The research design utilized a quasi-experimental design specifically the nonequivalent control group design. Both the intervention and control groups received a pretest prior to the intervention to establish their baseline condition. Subsequently, following the intervention period, both groups received a posttest to determine the resulting condition after treatment.

The study population consisted of postpartum mothers with a history of normal delivery residing in the working area of the TPMB in East Banjarmasin Sub-district. The research sample comprised 30 postpartum mothers who had undergone a normal delivery. Respondents were divided into two groups: the control group and the intervention group, with 15 respondents in each group. Control Group; This group participated in postnatal yoga sessions lasting 30 minutes, conducted twice a week, for a period of two weeks. Intervention Group; This group participated in postnatal yoga sessions lasting 30 minutes, conducted three times a week, for a period of two weeks. The sampling technique employed in this study was simple random sampling.

Quantitative data was collected using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) questionnaire as the research instrument. The data

collection procedure involved administering the EPDS questionnaire as the pretest to the respondents on the first day of the meeting. Respondents then participated in the postnatal yoga sessions for two weeks. Finally, the questionnaire was administered as the posttest on the last day of the meeting. The collected data was then processed, including data reduction, data presentation, and verification.

Univariate analysis involved descriptive analysis to determine the characteristics and distribution of each variable, encompassing frequency and percentage calculations. Bivariate analysis utilized parametric tests, specifically the

paired t-test, if the data was normally distributed, or the Mann-Whitney U test if the data was not normally distributed. All data analysis was performed using SPSS statistical software.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the study conducted on two respondent groups, the frequency distribution data for the mental health status of postpartum mothers was obtained, as presented in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. The data analysis proceeded to the bivariate stage, beginning with a test for data normality, the results of which are shown in Table 3.

Table 1
Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Group			
	Intervention Group		Control Group	
	N	%	N	%
Age				
21-35	14	93,33	15,00	100,00
>35	1	6,67	0,00	0,00
Education				
Junior High School	5	33,33	7,00	46,67
Senior High School	10	66,67	8,00	53,33
College	0	0,00	0,00	0,00
Job				
Housewife	13	86,67	11,00	73,33
Employee	2	13,33	4,00	26,67
Parity				
0 children	8	53,33	9,00	60,00
1 children	3	20,00	4,00	26,67
2 children	3	20,00	2,00	13,33
3 children	1	6,67	0,00	0,00
> 3 children	0	0,00	0,00	0,00

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Postpartum Mothers' Mental Health Status

Mental Health Status	Pretest		Posttest	
	N	%	N	%
None postpartum blues (Control Group)	11	73,3	15	100,0
Postpartum blues (Control Group)	4	26,7	0	0,0
None postpartum blues (Intervention Group)	10	66,7	15	100,0
Postpartum blues (Intervention Group)	5	33,3	0	0,0

Tabel 3
Data Normality Test

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest			
Control Group	.794	15	.003
Intervention Group	.841	15	.013
Posttest			
Control Group	.874	15	.038
Intervention Group	.799	15	.004

Table 4
Analysis of the Effectiveness of Prenatal and Postnatal Yoga Therapy on Mental Health in Postpartum Women

Analysis	Z Score	p-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Effectiveness of prenatal and postnatal yoga therapy on postpartum mental health (Posttest – Pretest)	-4.316	0.000	H ₀ rejected	Prenatal and postnatal yoga therapy significantly improves postpartum mental health.

Since the p-value (Significance) was <0.05 , the results presented in Table 4 indicate that the data was not normally distributed. Therefore, a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test was performed, as displayed in Table 5.

The negative Z-value ($Z = -4.316$) indicates that the median difference between the Posttest and Pretest scores is negative, meaning that Posttest scores were generally lower than Pretest scores. In the context of an effectiveness study where a lower score signifies better mental health (e.g., lower depression scores), this negative Z-value supports the hypothesis that the yoga therapy was effective, suggesting a reduction in depressive symptoms experienced by the postpartum mothers after receiving the intervention.

The p-value (0.000) presented in Table 4 is highly statistically significant (substantially below the conventional α level of 0.05). This result allows us to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the mental health scores of the postpartum mothers before (Pretest) and after (Posttest) receiving the Postnatal Yoga Therapy.

Specifically, when linked to the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), this finding demonstrates that the Postnatal Yoga Therapy was highly effective in significantly reducing the level of postnatal depression symptoms (lowering EPDS scores) in the cohort of postpartum women studied.

DISCUSSION

The puerperal period is characterized by crucial maternal adaptation processes aimed at physical recovery following childbirth. This adaptation is generally categorized into two main domains: physiological adaptation and psychological adaptation (Firawati et al., 2022; Rosnani & Mediarti, 2022). Physiological adaptation involves the return of the mother's physical condition and organ systems to their pre-pregnancy state, while psychological adaptation encompasses emotional changes and mental well-being.

Postpartum mothers frequently face various puerperal issues, including challenges to their physical and mental health, breastfeeding difficulties, and potential risks/complications arising from pregnancy and delivery that can negatively impact the mother's quality of life (Cooklin et al., 2018). Puerperal discomforts (feelings of unease related to the post-delivery state) are often characterized by maternal complaints such as vaginal discomfort, low initial breast milk supply, and lack of sleep. As a consequence, postpartum mothers experience a decline in quality of life across physical, psychological, and social dimensions compared to their previous state (Al Rehaili et al., 2023). The demands of adopting a new mother role, coupled with infant care, family responsibilities, and the physical recovery process, make the mother particularly vulnerable to risks such as infection, reduced immunity, and mood or behavioral changes linked to her physical and psychological condition.

Postnatal yoga plays a vital role in mitigating the severity of postnatal depression. The techniques employed (namely gentle movements, mindful breathing, relaxation, and meditation) exert a multi-dimensional impact on the human body (Adnyani, 2021; Suristyawati et al., 2019). Physically, yoga strengthens core muscles, alleviates chronic pain, and addresses common discomforts like back and thigh pain while simultaneously boosting energy and physical endurance. Psychologically, yoga is proven effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and negative emotions, stabilizing mood, improving sleep quality, and helping the mother build self-confidence in her maternal role, thereby holistically enhancing their quality of life (Astuti et al., 2022; de Orleans Casagrande et al., 2023).

The effectiveness of yoga therapy operates through a combination of physiological, psychological, and social mechanisms. Yoga, particularly through the practice of asanas (postures) and pranayama (breathing techniques), has been shown to lower the levels of the stress hormone cortisol (Atmaja & Rafelia, 2022). Postpartum depression is often linked to the dysregulation of the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis, and yoga helps normalize this stress response. Slow, focused breathing techniques, characteristic of yoga, activate the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest). This activation calms the sympathetic nervous system, which is often overactive during states of depression and anxiety, leading to profound relaxation (Anasuya et al., 2020; Bigalke & Carter, 2022).

The relaxation effect induced by yoga can also lead to the stabilization of systolic and diastolic blood pressure, thereby maintaining a stable state that enhances the mother's quality of life and supports her physical and psychological readiness. The resulting decrease in cerebral blood vessel pressure may reduce the intensity of postpartum pain and headaches (Anggraeni et al., 2025). This finding aligns with the notion that yoga assists postpartum mothers in achieving relaxation amidst the demands of their new role as caregivers. Slow breathing, focused posture execution, clearing the mind, and cultivating present moment awareness help balance the nervous system and the body's defense mechanisms. Consequently, yoga is capable of boosting self-confidence and fostering optimism in mothers as they confront health and emotional issues (de Campos et al., 2020; H.S et al., 2022).

Yoga teaches present moment awareness (mindfulness). This practice aids postpartum mothers in releasing rumination (negative repetitive

thoughts) about past worries or future anxieties, a hallmark of depression. By increasing awareness of the body and breath, mothers become better equipped to identify and manage negative emotions before they escalate into full panic or depressive responses. Furthermore, postnatal yoga can increase maternal self-efficacy in breastfeeding through the mechanisms of reduced stress levels, increased relaxation, and improved overall psychological well-being (Rhomadona & Imam, 2025).

Yoga is often performed in a group setting, which provides a crucial safe space and vital social support. Social isolation is a significant risk factor for postpartum depression. Postnatal yoga also aids physical recovery and improves body image, which is frequently negatively impacted after childbirth.

This study presents a novelty in examining the influence of postnatal yoga intensity on the mental health of postpartum mothers, with an emphasis on the frequency and duration of yoga practice after childbirth. Unlike most previous studies that only evaluated the general effects of yoga participation, this research highlights the level of yoga practice intensity as a key variable that may affect the psychological condition of mothers after delivery. Furthermore, the use of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) as a single measurement instrument provides a more specific and valid focus on postpartum depressive symptoms, which are among the most common mental health issues during the puerperal period. Therefore, this study is expected to offer a new contribution to understanding the relationship between yoga-based physical activity intensity and emotional stability in postpartum mothers, as well as to serve as a scientific foundation for developing non-pharmacological, yoga-based interventions in midwifery care services in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Postnatal Yoga Therapy was demonstrated to be highly effective in significantly reducing the level of postnatal depression symptoms (evidenced by the lowering of EPDS scores) in the cohort of postpartum mothers. Yoga strengthens bodily muscles, alleviates chronic pain, and mitigates common discomforts such as back and thigh pain, while simultaneously increasing energy levels and physical endurance. Yoga is proven effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and negative emotions; stabilizing mood; improving sleep quality; and helping mothers build self-confidence in their maternal role, thereby enhancing their overall quality of life.

SUGGESTION

It is recommended that further research be conducted on the interests, motivations, and inhibiting factors for postpartum mothers in participating in postnatal yoga.

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