

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Cricket is one of the prominent global team sports. It has undergone tremendous changes in the last two decades. With an emergence of Twenty20 tournaments, the physical preparation of elite cricket players has become complex with high match injury incidence. Premier league designs have also exposed the players to immense aggression, competitiveness and expectations. *Yoga* as a mind-body training is associated with having positive effects on a person's physical and psychological conditions, bringing better mind-body equilibrium.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES: Evaluating the impact of *yoga* in facilitating muscular functioning and mindfulness among asymptomatic male cricket players.

METHODS:

Participants - First-class domestic male cricket players from Karnataka State Cricket Association in the age group of 18-35 years were randomized into *yoga* group $n=42$ and wait-list control group $n=40$.

Design - Longitudinal randomized controlled trial.

Assessments - Primary outcome measures of muscular functioning were core stability, flexibility, range of motion, static balance, dynamic balance and proprioception of the ankle. Five-facet mindfulness questionnaire was used to assess mindfulness.

Intervention - Players received the *yoga* module for five days per week for a duration of six weeks. Assessments were held at baseline, immediate post-intervention, and a follow-up after six months of intervention.

RESULTS: Group differences in the change in parameters over time was modelled using linear mixed-effects regression method. Comparison of model fit indicates a highly significant ($p<0.001$) difference between the model as compared to the baseline model among most of the variables under muscular functioning. Among the five facets of the mindfulness questionnaire, comparison of the model fit indicates a significant ($p<0.001$) difference between the model as compared to the baseline model. There was no significant effect ($p>0.001$) at either time or group, however, there was a significant interaction effect at T2 (immediate post-intervention) among all the five facets. No significant interaction effect (group*time interaction) was found in the follow-up study.

CONCLUSION: Integrating this *yoga* module into the competitive world of cricket appears to be appropriate for enhancing muscular functioning and maintaining a state of mindfulness among male cricket players. Continuous practice can reinforce sustainable benefits for male cricket players.