

The Influence of Alternative Medicine Practices on Stress and Anxiety Among College Students

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Introduction

- Stress & anxiety rates are prevalent among college students.
- Daily lives and academic workload contribute to stress.
- Stress and anxiety are precursors to poor mental and physical health.

Objective

To examine the relationship between participation in meditation, acupuncture, and yoga [MAY] and rates of stress and anxiety among UCSD students.

Data Collection

- Students at three locations on the UCSD campus: RIMAC gym, Student Health Services, and The Zone.
- After consent, we gathered qualitative data through an open ended questionnaire

Sample Description

- 12 UCSD undergraduate students gathered near Rimac, The Zone and SHS
- 5 male students, 7 female
- 8 Caucasian, 2 Hispanic, 2 Asian/Pacific Islander

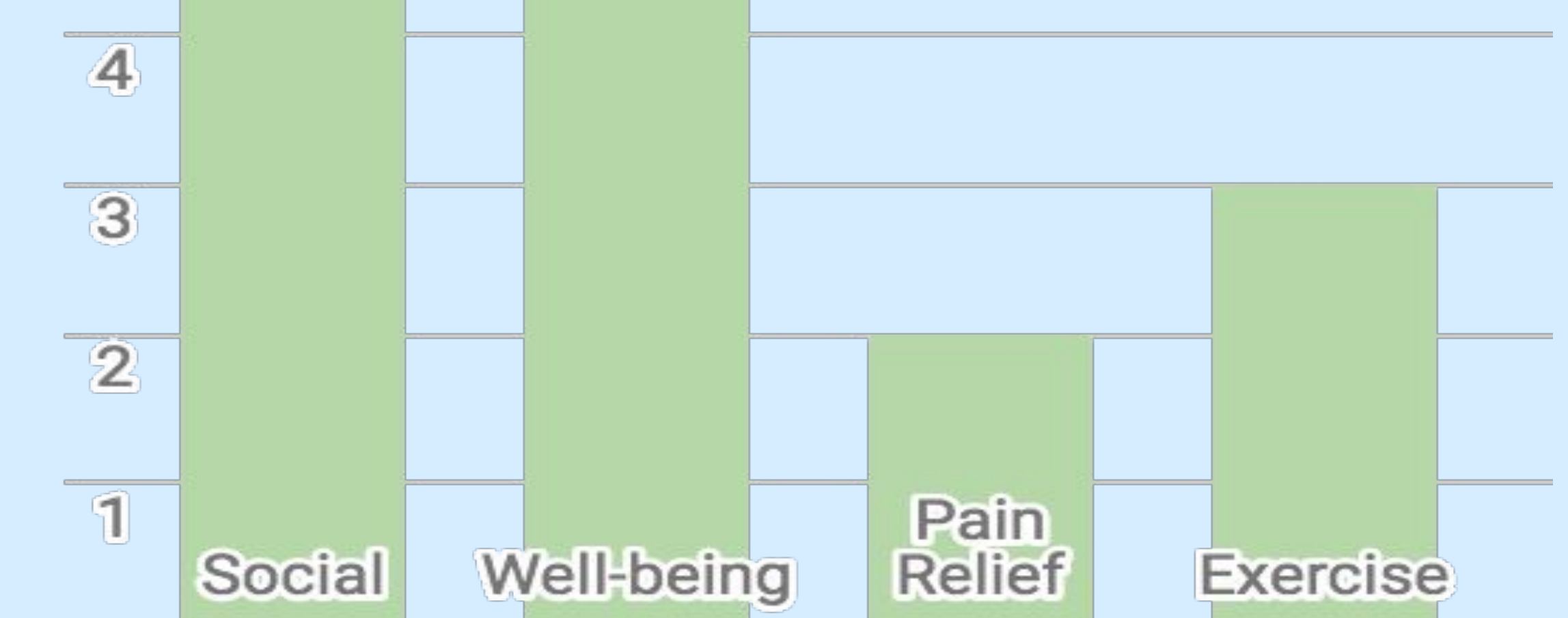
Results

- 58% of participants practiced yoga; 50% practiced meditation; 17% practiced acupuncture.
- Nearly every participant reported that engagement in MAY had a positive effect on their attitude, perspective, or mood right after they practiced it.
- Common feelings experienced after participating in practice:
 - Meditation participants: Calmness, confidence, clear thoughts
 - Acupuncture participants: Pain relief
 - Yoga participants: Energized, focused, stress relief, calmness
- Some responses include:
 - "It made me feel more at peace."
 - "It helped me be more accepting of myself and others."
 - "It allowed me to start work earlier, be more productive, and communicate better with people around me."

Conclusion

- Participation in MAY led to several short-term benefits.
- Students reported that they felt momentary positive emotions, such as happiness and calmness. Many also reported that it caused a decrease in negative emotions, such as stress.
- Those who practiced yoga and meditation felt that these activities led them to feel more relaxed and calm. Among acupuncture participants, they all felt that it aided in relieving acute pain.

Participation in MAY



Policy Implications

Mindfulness Course as a general requirement among UCSD students. This course would consist of:

- Educating students on the prevalence and severity of stress and anxiety among college students.
- Discussing the positive short-term effects that mindfulness, such as MAY has on well-being.
- Demonstrating healthy ways to cope with negative emotions.
- Informing students about all of the mental health services available on campus for students to easily access (CAPS, SHS, the Zone, and more).

Student Perspective After Engaging in MAY

