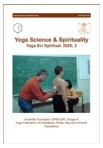
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The International Journal of Yoga Therapy (IJYT): A Historical and Thematic Review of its Scientific Contribution and Academic Development

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Yoga therapy has become an increasingly recognized complementary approach in modern healthcare, with growing scientific interest in its applications for physical and mental health. The International Journal of Yoga Therapy (IJYT), published by the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) and indexed in PubMed/MEDLINE and Scopus, serves as an important peer-reviewed platform for scholarly and evidence-based research in this field.

AIM: This review examines the scientific contribution and academic development of the IJYT, including its historical evolution, thematic orientation, editorial scope, and continuing role in advancing yoga therapy and integrative healthcare research.

METHODS: A qualitative, literature-based historical and thematic review was conducted to examine the journal's development, publication scope, and thematic focus based on available editorial, bibliographic, and journal-related sources.

RESULTS: IJYT has maintained a consistent publication record as a specialized journal in yoga therapy, featuring research ranging from clinical applications to conceptual, philosophical, and methodological discussions. The journal demonstrates a recurring integration of scientific and traditional yogic perspectives, while its indexing in PubMed/MEDLINE and Scopus and its association with a professional organization contribute to its academic visibility and relevance within the field.

CONCLUSIONS: IJYT plays an important role in the development and dissemination of yoga therapy research within integrative medicine. Its continued publication supports the advancement of evidence-based knowledge and contributes to the academic and clinical growth of the field.

Introduction

Yoga therapy is an emerging field within integrative healthcare that applies yoga principles and practices in a structured therapeutic context to support physical, psychological, and behavioral well-being [1]. Unlike conventional biomedical approaches that primarily focus on symptom reduction, yoga therapy emphasizes individualized assessment, lifestyle modification, and active patient participation [2]. Yoga therapy is increasingly recognized as a holistic therapeutic approach that integrates physical, mental, and behavioral dimensions of health through the individualized application of yogic practices [3].

Within this field, the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy* (IJYT) functions as a key academic platform for research dissemination, clinical reporting, and theoretical reflection [4]. Over time, it has contributed to the development and formalization of yoga therapy as both a clinical practice and a scholarly discipline, reflecting its historical evolution, editorial maturation, and indexing in major biomedical databases such as MEDLINE/PubMed and Scopus [5].

Theoretically, yoga therapy is situated within integrative health models such as mind–body medicine and the biopsychosocial framework, which conceptualize health as an interaction between physical, psychological, and social dimensions [6].

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the thematic and scholarly development of IJYT, with a focus on identifying dominant conceptual patterns

within the journal's discourse on yoga therapy.

Materials and methods

This study employed a qualitative, literature-based historical and thematic review design focused on IJYT. Relevant publications from the journal, together with official journal information and publicly available bibliometric sources, were identified and examined.

Inclusion criteria focused on publications explicitly addressing yoga therapy and topics related to the historical development, thematic orientation, and scientific positioning of the journal, while irrelevant or non-related publications were excluded.

A thematic analysis was conducted through systematic reading, coding, and categorization of the selected textual material [7]. The identified themes were organized to reflect recurring conceptual tendencies, clinical applications, and the broader development of yoga therapy as presented within the journal.

As the study was based exclusively on published literature, ethical approval was not required.

Results

Historical and Institutional Development

The *International Association of Yoga Therapists* (IAYT), based in the United States, was founded in 1989 by Larry Payne, PhD, and Richard Miller, PhD, and played an important role in the institutionalization and professionalization of yoga therapy as a distinct field. The organization initially focused on building a professional community, developing standards for yoga teaching and therapy, and establishing platforms for knowledge dissemination [8].

The journal that later became the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy* (IJYT) originated in the 1990s under the title *Journal of the International Association of Yoga Therapists*. Larry Payne, PhD, served as IAYT's founding president and publisher, while Richard Miller, PhD, served as the founding editor of the *Journal of the International Association of Yoga Therapists*. In 1999, during a structural transition in which IAYT operated within the Yoga Research and Education Center (YREC), the journal was renamed IJYT [8], [9].



Figure 1: Visual identity and publication development of IAYT and IJYT, including organizational logos and selected journal covers from different publication periods

An institutional development occurred in the mid-2000s, when editorial structures became more formalized and an editorial board and peer-review panel were introduced, gradually transitioning the journal toward a fully peer-reviewed academic publication model [9].

IJYT further strengthened its academic profile through increasing visibility in major scientific databases [5], [9].

IJYT is currently indexed in MEDLINE/PubMed [5] and Scopus [10] and is published annually. Articles are released online continuously upon acceptance, ensuring ongoing dissemination of research in yoga therapy. The journal includes original research, reviews, methodological papers, and theoretical perspectives relevant to all traditions of yoga therapy [9].

The editorial leadership of IJYT has evolved over time, reflecting the growing scientific scope of the field. Richard Miller, PhD, served as the founding editor during the journal's first six years, followed by Steven Kleinmann, MD, for the subsequent two years. Editorial responsibility was later assumed by Georg Feuerstein, PhD, and later Trisha Lamb, who continued the journal's scholarly development and mission. The journal is currently led by Editor-in-Chief Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, PhD, and Associate Editor Catherine Justice, DPT, PT, C-IAYT. Dr. Khalsa is a prominent researcher in yoga therapy and mind–body medicine and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, whose scientific work has significantly contributed to the growing academic and clinical recognition of yoga-based interventions. Dr. Justice's work spans academic and clinical spaces, where she focuses on the intersections of whole person, integrative healthcare models, trauma informed care, and health

equity. Under their direction IJYT continues to strengthen its integration within academic and clinical research networks in complementary and integrative health [9], [10].



Figure 2: Current editorial leadership of IJYT: Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, PhD, Editor-in-Chief (left), and Catherine Justice, DPT, PT, C-IAYT, Associate Editor (right). (Source: Harvard Medical School; IAYT editorial information)

Bibliometric Profile and Scientific Positioning

IJYT represents both an academic publication and an institutional outcome of the broader development of yoga therapy under IAYT, functioning as a platform for the consolidation of research, clinical practice, and theoretical discourse in the field. [8] In addition to its annual volume, the journal publishes an electronic supplement featuring abstracts from the International Association of Yoga Therapists' Symposium on Yoga Therapy and Research (SYTAR) and the Symposium on Yoga Research (SYR). [3], [8] IJYT has been published since 1990 and comprises 35 annual volumes up to 2025, along with occasional special issues and symposium supplements. The journal publishes one main issue per year, with continuous online articles [4].



Figure 3: Year-wise publication output of IJYT (2016–2025), illustrating fluctuations in the number of articles published annually. Data were compiled from official journal volume records

Thematic content published in IJYT spans research articles, clinical studies, case reports, editorials, reviews, and theoretical, philosophical, and practical perspectives on yoga therapy, highlighting the journal's role in supporting both scholarly inquiry and professional practice. Since 2009, IAYT has published a separate triannual print and electronic magazine, Yoga Therapy Today (YTT), which focuses exclusively on professional clinical practice; YTT continues the earlier publications Yoga Studies Online Journal and Yoga Therapy in Practice, which were produced from 2002–2005 and 2005–2009, respectively. A recurring thematic focus within the IJYT concerns issues and challenges related to the field of yoga therapy, including the integration of yoga into healthcare systems, professional challenges encountered by yoga therapists and teachers, and the relevance of traditional yoga philosophy to contemporary therapeutic practice. A major thematic focus is the therapeutic use of yoga for physical and mental health conditions. Another thematic focus is the development and validation of outcome measurement tools specific to yoga therapy. These contributions are grounded in relevant yogic texts and academic literature, reflecting the journal's emphasis on scholarly and evidence-informed discussion.

According to SCImago Journal Rank metrics (2024), the journal has an H-index of 21, an SJR score of 0.357, and is ranked in the second quartile (Q2) within the field of Complementary and Manual Therapy, reflecting its recognized scientific contribution to the development of yoga therapy and integrative healthcare. [9] The journal is also indexed in MEDLINE/PubMed and Scopus, enhancing its scientific visibility and international academic accessibility [5]. The 2024 2-year impact of International Journal of Yoga Therapy is 0.667 [11].

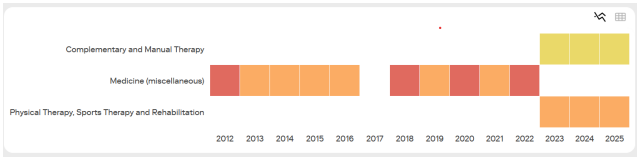


Figure 4: SCImago quartile rankings of IJYT across relevant subject categories. (source: SCImago Journal & Country Rank)

IJYT follows a continuous online publication model, where articles are published upon acceptance as they are processed, allowing for the rapid dissemination of research findings. Currently, the journal is accessible through individual IAYT membership (starting at USD 85 annually) or institutional subscriptions ranging from USD 200 to USD 280 per year [9]. IJYT content is also available through EBCSO's Alt HealthWatch database.

A dominant discursive pattern is the emphasis on the clinical and research-based framing of yoga therapy. The journal predominantly employs biomedical and psychological terminology, presenting yoga therapy as an evidence-informed intervention applicable to a range of health conditions, including mental health disorders, rehabilitation contexts, and chronic disease management. This reflects a broader tendency to align yoga therapy with the standards of

integrative medicine and clinical research, thereby enhancing its scientific credibility. At the same time, the discourse reveals a consistent integration of interdisciplinary perspectives, as IJYT incorporates philosophical and theoretical dimensions of yoga alongside clinical and empirical approaches, suggesting a hybrid epistemological framework. This dual orientation allows the journal to maintain continuity with traditional yoga concepts while simultaneously translating them into contemporary therapeutic and scientific language. Overall, the discourse of IJYT reflects an ongoing effort to bridge traditional yogic philosophy with contemporary scientific paradigms, positioning yoga therapy as both a holistic and evidence-based practice. At the same time, the journal contributes to strengthening the institutional and academic status of yoga therapy within the broader field of integrative health research [4], [9].

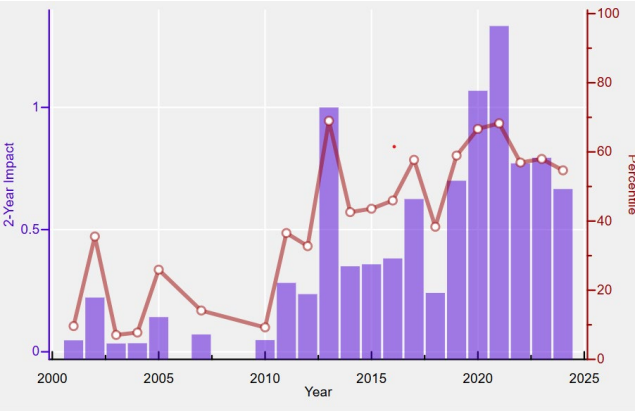


Figure 5: Trends in the bibliometric impact of IJYT, showing the journal's 2-year impact indicator and percentile ranking across the period 2000–2025 (Source: Exaly. International Journal of Yoga Therapy metrics (2026)

Beyond its role as a publication outlet, IJYT functions as an international communication hub for the yoga therapy community, facilitating knowledge dissemination and professional exchange through its close association with the IAYT [8], [9].

Discussion

IJYT holds a distinctive position within integrative and complementary medicine, functioning not only as a scientific journal but also as an important institutional driver in the professionalization of yoga therapy. Its bibliometric profile, including its Q2 journal ranking, suggests a stable and gradually strengthening presence within a specialized interdisciplinary field [11]. This broader trend is consistent with recent bibliometric analyses showing a substantial increase in yoga-related scientific publications and a growing integration of yoga research within medical and health sciences disciplines [12].

The journal's development over time, particularly the introduction of peer review and its indexing in MEDLINE/PubMed and Scopus, has contributed to its academic credibility and international reach [5], [9]. What emerges from this trajectory is a publication that increasingly connects clinical research with broader theoretical and experiential perspectives, positioning yoga therapy within both scientific and practice-oriented contexts.

Thematic analysis suggests a dual orientation within the journal's content. A substantial portion of the published work adopts biomedical and psychological frameworks, focusing on clinical outcomes and the application of yoga therapy across various health conditions. At the same time, the journal engages with traditional yogic concepts and philosophical perspectives, which are often presented alongside contemporary scientific approaches within a broader interpretive framework. This combination creates a space in which empirical research and traditional knowledge are brought into dialogue with one another.

Taking together, these elements suggest that IJYT contributes to shaping how yoga therapy is understood as a field. It supports not only the dissemination of research but also the gradual formation of a shared scientific and professional identity for the discipline. In this sense, its contribution goes beyond publication metrics, extending into the broader process of legitimizing yoga therapy within contemporary healthcare and academic systems [4], [9].

Future research should continue to strengthen the empirical foundation of the field through well-designed randomized controlled trials, while also working toward greater methodological consistency and inclusion of diverse populations and clinical settings.

Conclusion

Yoga therapy incorporates all of the practices of yoga, including asanas, pranayama, guided imagery (bhavana), and meditation within a holistic therapeutic framework. Evidence from publications in the IJYT suggests that yoga therapy has been used in the management of various chronic and non-communicable conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, musculoskeletal disorders, anxiety, depression, and stress-related conditions. Studies have also explored its supportive role in cancer care and rehabilitation, showing the growing recognition of yoga therapy within contemporary integrative and complementary healthcare.

Through the dissemination of original research, systematic reviews, and clinical case studies, IJYT has contributed to the development of yoga therapy as a non-invasive and potentially cost-effective therapeutic intervention. In doing so, the journal supports the ongoing articulation of yoga therapy as both clinical practice and an academic field.

Overall, IJYT plays a central role in consolidating and advancing knowledge in yoga therapy, reflecting its gradual establishment as a recognized component of integrative medicine and scholarly inquiry.

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