

**A Study of the Feasibility and Acceptability of Gentle Yoga for
Insomnia in Older Women with Osteoarthritis**

Diana M. Taibi, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor
Biobehavioral Nursing and Health Systems, University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Background: Osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the most common chronic illnesses and is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Over 50% of persons with arthritis report difficulty sleeping. Both OA and sleep disturbance are more prevalent in older women than men. Yoga is a multimodal complementary and alternative medical (CAM) practice that may reduce OA-related insomnia in older women.

Aims: (1) to test the feasibility and acceptability of a gentle yoga practice for older women with OA and insomnia, and (2) to gather preliminary evidence on the effects of the intervention on self-report and actigraphic sleep outcomes.

Methods: The study design is one-group, quasi-experimental with pre- and post-intervention outcome assessment. Ten older women with OA and insomnia symptoms will attend 8 weekly 75-minute yoga classes and practice a gentle, 20-minute yoga routine nightly 30 minutes before bedtime. The yoga practice includes gentle stretching, strengthening, and relaxing poses as well as breathing techniques. Sleep is assessed before and after the 8-week intervention by one week of nightly sleep diaries and wrist actigraphy (a wrist-worn device that measures movement to detect sleep/wake behavior).

Results: The study is in progress and will be completed in December 2008. Feasibility of study recruitment proved highly successful, especially from an advertisement placed in the free Seattle Woman publication. Fifty interested persons contacted the study coordinator, with 13 qualified to participate. Other feasibility outcomes that will be assessed upon study completion include participant retention, treatment fidelity (monthly observation by the PI of the yoga instruction), and treatment acceptability assessed through class attendance, nights of home practice, and a follow-up interview with participants. Pre- and post intervention sleep outcomes will be compared by paired t-tests.

Significance: The preliminary data from this study will serve as the foundation for an R21 grant proposal of a randomized clinical trial (RCT) of gentle yoga for insomnia in older persons with OA.