

# Impact of Yoga on Mental and Physical Health during Covid-19

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**Abstract:** *The entire world is fighting with COVID-19. 213 countries are affected with COVID-19. Every human being on this earth is affected by this virus directly or indirectly. The most advanced and developed countries have come on their knees by the virus which is very small that we cannot even see that. Every lives have been affected mentally or physically or both by this virus.*

*In this situation, Yoga and Meditation played very effective role in every life. Yoga and meditation helps in being strong mentally or physically. Where Yoga helps in boosting immunity and physical strength at same time meditation helps in being mentally strong and to fight with the stress and depression. Regular practice of yoga helps in getting the control in terms of response: physical, psychological or emotional.*

**Keywords:** *Yoga, Meditation, Stress, Depression, COVID-19, Mentally Strong, Physical Strength.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Yoga is welcomed world over for its health promoting and wellness creating aspects. Research conducted on Yoga has proved efficiency of regular yoga practice including meditation. Regular practice of yoga and meditation helps in reducing stress level as well as in strengthening the immune system. Mind and body are interconnected, any imbalance in these two, can be the reason for unhealthy body. So, Yoga and meditation helps in making the balance between body and mind.

The spread of COVID-19 has brought everyone in the search for survival of life. Everyone is searching for the solution to fight with this virus. COVID-19 has brought another pandemic that is Fear. Fear to lose the life, everyone everywhere is scared to death.

In past few months, a group of modern medical science has developed a Psycho-Neuro- Immunology. It deals with how our thoughts and emotions can affect our immune system. Stress, depression, fear and negative emotions and thoughts are enough to weaken our immune system. In this situation, Yoga including meditation, positive emotions and relaxation helps in strengthen the immune system.

Swami Gitananda Giri used to say, "The first disease is the sense of duality, leading to fear that created imbalance of mind leading to diseases in the body.

Now, we need to refocus on our own Swastha (health), our own Kshamata (inherent capacity), and ability to be responsible for our health and happiness. Yoga empowers us, and makes us responsible to take care of our own life. So, it is the time to promote holistic health for each and every one of us.

All medical authorities are emphasizing on social (physical) distancing and personal hygiene. In Yoga, it is termed as Yama-Niyama principles of cleanliness, purity and self-control. Sense of Seva and Nishkama, terms given in Karma Yoga, are to be emphasised to help those who are in need.

Regular Yoga practices including pranayama, meditation especially done with mindfulness will help us in strengthen our immune system and to have control over our mind and thoughts as well as it will build a sense of empowerment and confidence from within.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH PAPER:

- To analyze the effect of yoga on physical and mental health.
- To evaluate the effect on yoga on anxiety and depression.
- To evaluate the immunity and energy level.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN:

We have taken descriptive research design because both primary as well as secondary data have been considered for this research. For secondary data, exploratory research design has been taken. To target the objective interview method was carried out and the impact of yoga was evaluated.

In this study 25 people of both sexes, interested in yoga were selected. They all were doing yoga 6 days in week during COVID-19 period, the classes were online.

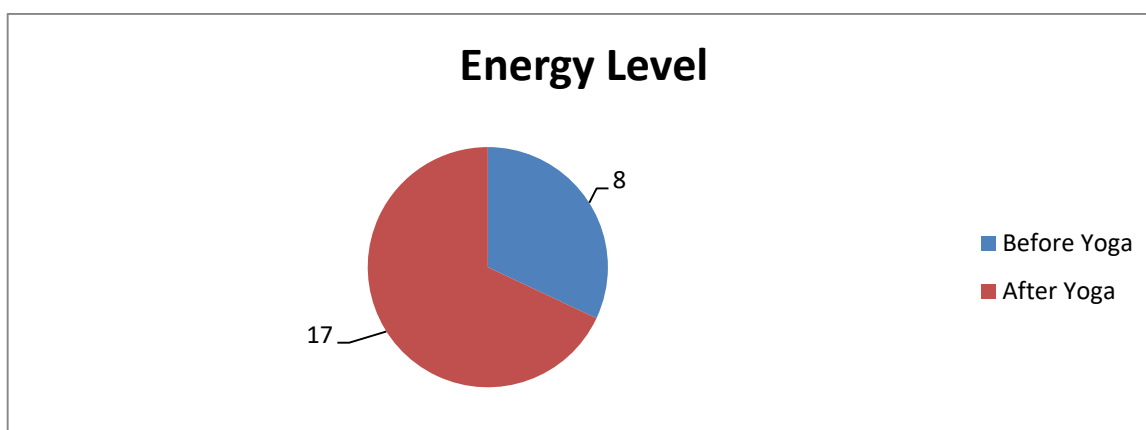
**3.2 SAMPLE SIZE:**

From the below table, we infer that 10 respondents are male and 15 are female. According to age group, we find that 5 are between 20-30 years, 15 are of 31-40 years and 5 are of 41-50 years. From the responses collected for Education 15 are graduated, 6 are Post Graduated and 4 are post Doctorate. According to occupation group, 5 are students, 10 are house wives, 5 are employees are 5 are self-employed.

**TABLE 1: SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

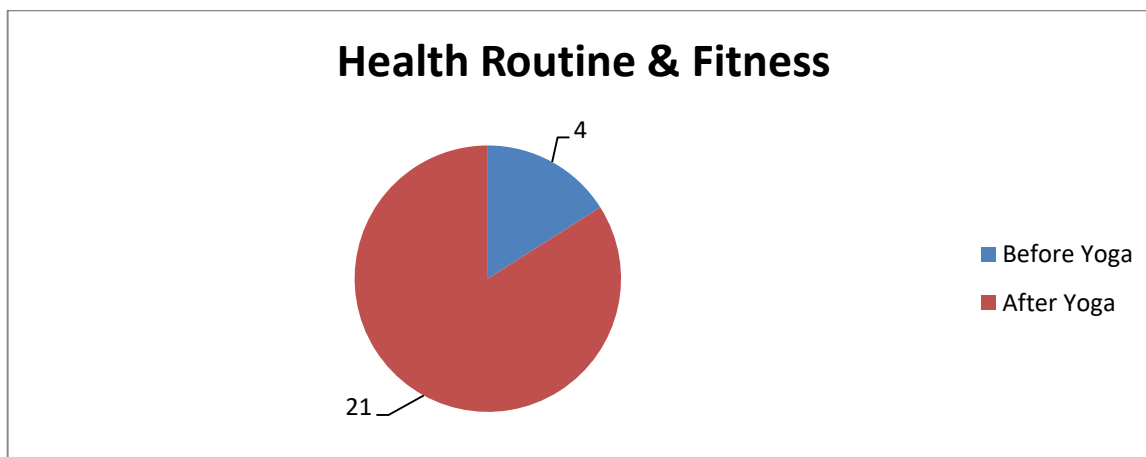
SEX	Male	Female		
	10	15		
AGE	20-30	31-40	41-50	
	5	15	5	
EDUCATION	Graduation	Post-Graduation	Doctorate	
	15	6	4	
OCCUPATION	Students	House-Wives	Employees	Self-Employed
	5	10	5	5

**4. DATA ANALYSIS:**



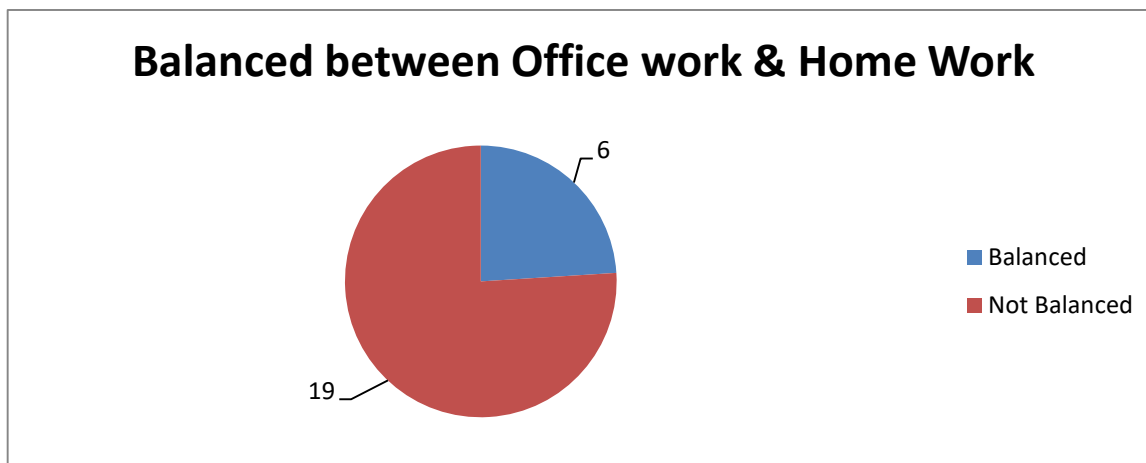
**Figure 1: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in enhancing the energy level”**

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 72 per cent respondents agreed that their energy level has increased after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.



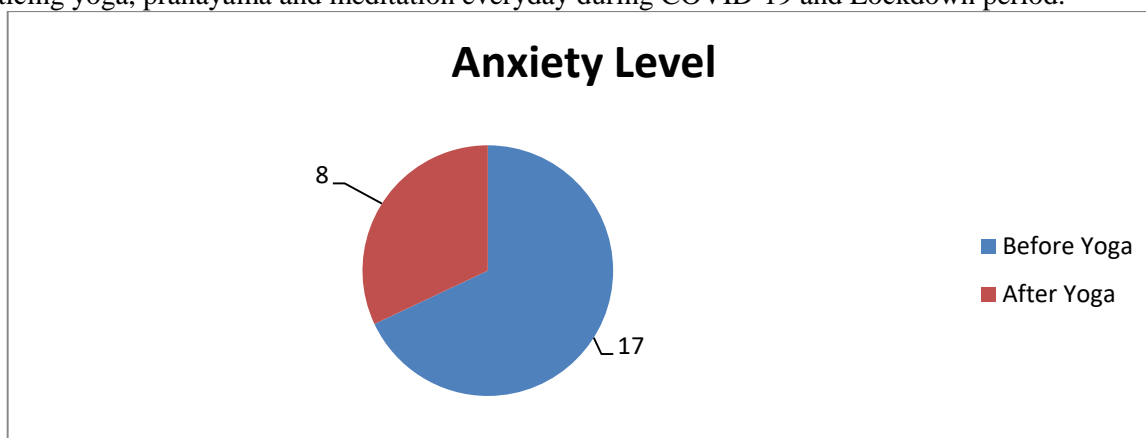
**Figure 2: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in enhancing the health routine & fitness”**

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 84 per cent respondents agreed that their health routine has increased after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.



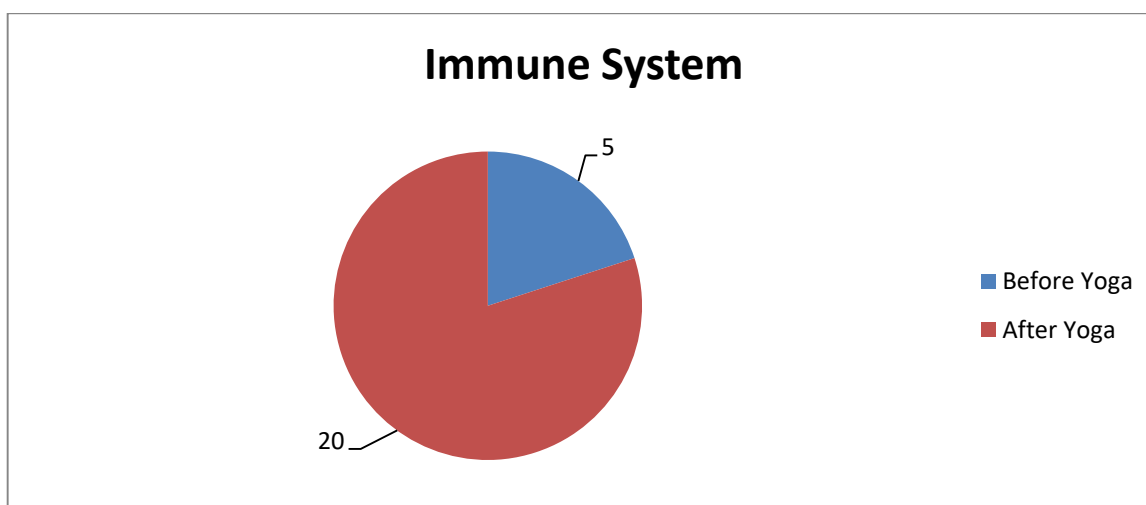
**Figure 3: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in enhancing the balance between office work and home work”**

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 76 per cent respondents agreed that they balance their office and home work effectively after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.



**Figure 4: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in decreasing the anxiety level”**

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 68 per cent respondents agreed that anxiety level has decreased after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.



**Figure 5: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in improving the immune system”**

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 80 per cent respondents agreed that their immune system has improved after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.

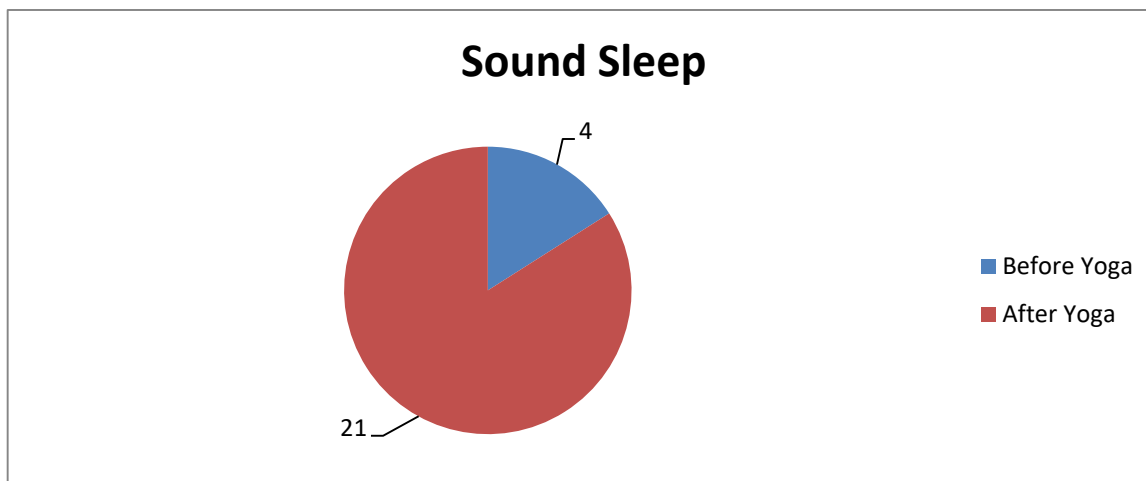


Figure 6: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in improving the sound sleep”

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 84 per cent respondents agreed that their sound sleep has improved after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period.

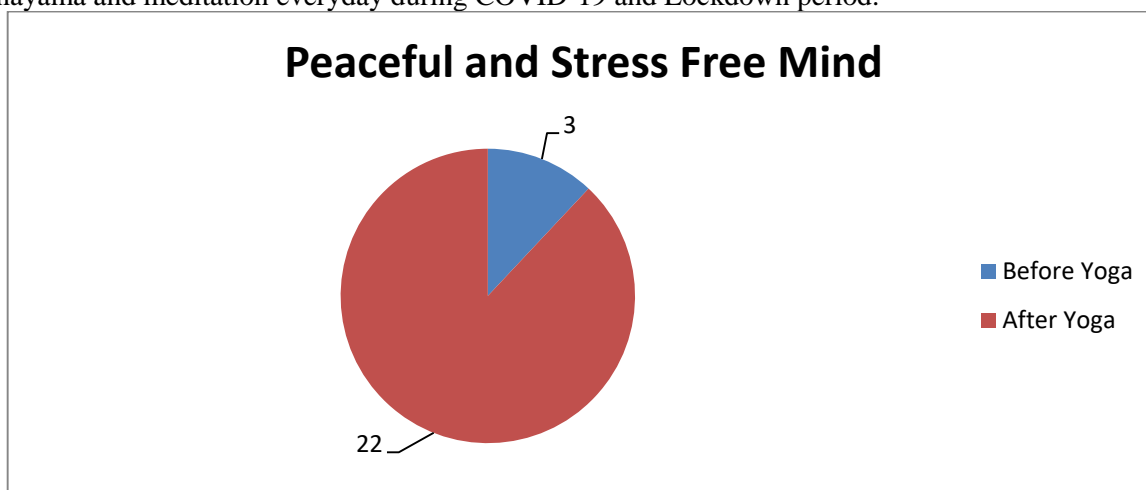


Figure 7: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in improving the peaceful and stress free mind”

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 88 per cent respondents agreed that after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period it leads to improvement in peaceful and stress free mind.

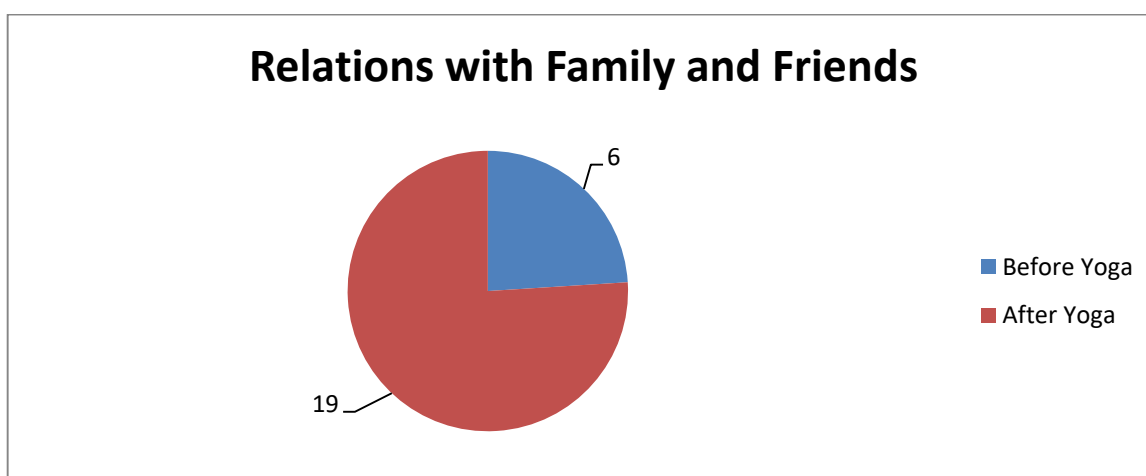


Figure 8: Response to the statement “Yoga plays a vital role in improving the relations with family and friends”

**Analysis:** From all respondents, 76 per cent respondents agreed that after practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation everyday during COVID-19 and Lockdown period it leads to improvement in the relations with family and friends.

## 5. YOGA: NEED OF THE HOUR FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Rate of mood disorders and suicide related outcomes have increased in past few months. This current COVID-19 situation, social media, losing the job, reduction in financial status has become the reason for mental health problems. Even students are facing the problem of anxiety; the reasons are financial problems in family, lack of break, the pressure of study and work and the different thinking from parents. The less or no physical activity is also the reason for these mental health issues. Mental health treatment is the need of the hour.

Yoga, the physical, mental and spiritual practice, includes Yama (Individual Ethics), Niyama (Ethics towards Society), Asana (Physical postures), Pranayama (Breathing exercises) and Dhayana (Meditation). By practicing Asana, Pranayama and Dhayana, one can learn to balance success and failure and can improve one's mental health.

The person, who is new to yoga, firstly may focus on poses but when you practice at deeper level, you will notice that yoga practice is related with mind. Yogic science told about how our thought takes place in the mind, then how emotions deepen the intensity of that thought, and finally how a thought manifests in the form of positive or negative energy.

Here's exactly how yoga affects the mind:

- Practicing full Yogic breath, ujjayi breath, relaxing poses such as Sisuasana, Makarasana and Shavasana, doing Dhayana or Mudra Pranayama helps in decreasing anxiety and producing calm feeling in the body and mind. As the practice of these moves our sympathetic nervous system to the parasympathetic nervous system.
- When we practice yoga, our brain releases such chemicals that make us to feel more relaxed.
- The "Control Panel" of our brain is frontal lobe, which is responsible for cognitive skills like emotional expression, problem solving, and memory. This area of the brain also affected by different mental disorders, because it works behind all our decisions, thoughts and planning. When we practice yoga, the brain slows down the activity of the frontal lobe, which prevents mental health problems.
- Yoga helps in body flexibility, body strength and weight loss. Yoga retains physical fitness and improves physical functioning.

## 6. HOW YOGA IMPROVES MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Yoga helps a lot not only in relaxation but also in reducing the symptoms of mental disorders. It helps in developing awareness towards our thought process. It helps in handling any triggers which known as mental illness and negative emotions, in better way.

From asanas (postures) to yogic breathing, yoga empowers us with the ability to remain calm and clear in any favorable or unfavorable situations. Regular practice of yoga helps in getting the control in terms of response: physical, psychological or emotional.

How exactly does yoga help improve mental and physical health? There are many ways in which yoga can help a well-being.

- **Promote Mindfulness:** Mindfulness means observing your own thought pattern without any judgment or inquiry. Yoga and mindfulness are complementary to each other. Both focus on keeping the mind calm and quiet. Different meditation techniques in yoga involve mindfulness, like pranayama, breathing techniques like Sudarshankriya, different meditations, mudra pranayama etc. All these techniques help to attain mindfulness by focusing on specific way of breathing.
- **Develop self-confidence:** The sense of self-belongingness develops the self-confidence and yoga creates the sense of self-belongingness. Yoga poses such as Vrikshasana (Tree Pose), Utkatasana (Chair Pose), Phalakasana (Plank), SetuBandhasana (Bridge Pose), AdhoMukhaSvanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose) not only make us strong physically but mentally as well. These poses help in building self-confidence.
- **Reduce Stress:** There are various reasons for stress like anger, guilt, grief and low confidence. Lack of self-confidence and self-motivation is the very common reason for stress now days. Stress may lead to number of physical and psychological effects like insomnia, migraine, headache, muscle aches and lack of concentration. Yoga and Pranayama helps in coping up with stress and to increase concentration.

To assess the psychophysiological effects of yoga on stress in college students, a study from India suggests some simple yoga practices to reduce stress. These include:

- initial prayer
- kapalbhati (skull shining breathing)
- Sun Salutation
- yoga poses like Mountain Pose, Wheel Pose, Cobra Pose
- pranayama techniques like anulomvilom (alternate nostril breathing), sheetali pranayama (cooling breath), seetkari pranayama (hissing breath)
- OM meditation and ending prayer

In another study conducted on secondary school students in the Vijayapur district of Karnataka (India), the impact of yogic, physical exercises on academic anxiety was assessed. The study found that yoga practice improves positive abilities, emotional competence, and harmonious relationships between each, which reduces stress, anxiety, and negativity among the groups who practiced yoga.

- Improve Social development: Yoga, Pranayama and Meditation help us to be more activate in society. Yoga motivates us to do work for society without any selfishness, which is known as Karma Yoga. Yoga helps in improving social behavior and accepting with rapid social changes.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

People felt active during lockdown while practicing yoga. They were able to maintain health routine and were able to balance study/ office work and home-work. They felt less depressed and were able to enjoy with family. They were able to control their eating habit to maintain their immune system. Their respiratory system was working effectively as the result of breathing exercise and pranayama. They were more peaceful while practicing meditation and doing chanting. They were facing less physical and mental diseases like High or Low blood pressure, Headache, fever, insomnia, migraine, anxiety etc.

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