

“Healing the Healer: A Case Report of Recovery from Severe Depression in an Experienced Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) Practitioner”

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ABSTRACT

Depression is a major mental health disorder influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors. Family conflict, lack of social support, and loss of purpose can increase vulnerability to depression. Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) is an integrated complementary healthcare system that combines rhythmic breathing, meditation, physical exercises, forgiveness practices, no-touch energy healing, and healthy lifestyle practices. This case report describes the recovery of a 58-year-old female long-term YPV practitioner who developed severe depression with suicidal ideation, anxiety, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction, chronic fatigue, generalized body pain, and significant weight loss (44 kg to 37 kg) following prolonged family resistance to her healing activities, social isolation, and inadequate nutritional intake. Despite profound physical and emotional distress, she remained connected to YPV by attending daily online Morning Sadhana and Divine Group Healing sessions. She reported that hearing the Guru's message, *"No one needs you, but the Guru needs you. Work for Him,"* restored her sense of purpose and motivated her to actively re-engage in spiritual practices. Along with continued conventional medical treatment, improved nutrition, healing support from fellow practitioners, and participation in a two-month residential YPV program at YPV Ashram, Sri Ramana Trust, her condition improved substantially. Within six months, her weight increased to 54 kg, blood pressure stabilized at 129/75 mmHg, thyroid function normalized, chronic pain markedly reduced, and her psychological wellbeing improved. This case highlights the complex interaction of psychosocial stressors, spiritual coping, conventional medical care, nutritional rehabilitation, and social support in recovery from severe depression. It suggests that Yoga Prana Vidya may serve as a complementary approach to enhance resilience and functional recovery when integrated with standard medical management.

KEYWORDS: Depression; Yoga Prana Vidya System; Psychosocial stress; Spiritual wellbeing; Case report

ARTICLE DETAILS

Published On:
27 August 2026

Available on:
<https://ijmscrs.com>

INTRODUCTION

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders among women worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 5% of adults globally experience depression, with women being nearly twice as likely as men to develop the disorder. Depression is a leading cause of disability among women and contributes substantially to impaired quality of life, reduced productivity, and an increased risk of suicide. The higher prevalence of depression among women has been attributed to a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural

factors, including gender roles, caregiving responsibilities, interpersonal stress, and unequal access to social and emotional support ^{(1), (2)}.

Family support is a major determinant of women's mental wellbeing. Studies have consistently shown that poor family support, marital conflict, restrictive family expectations, lack of autonomy, and the inability to pursue personally meaningful goals, careers, or spiritual aspirations are associated with a significantly higher risk of depression and anxiety among women. Women whose passions or service-oriented activities are discouraged or opposed by family

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members may experience chronic psychological stress, diminished self-esteem, social isolation, and loss of purpose, all of which are recognized contributors to depressive illness (2), (3), (4), (5).

Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) is an integrated complementary healthcare system comprising rhythmic yogic breathing, physical exercises, meditation, forgiveness practices, healthy lifestyle modifications, and no-touch energy healing. It is practiced as an adjunct to conventional medical care to promote physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. Published clinical reports have demonstrated encouraging outcomes of YPV in chronic medical and psychological disorders. Furthermore, a comprehensive review of biofield energy healing interventions reported improvements in pain, (6), (7), (8) stress, anxiety, (9), (10) quality of life, and psychological wellbeing, (11), (12), (13), (14) when used alongside conventional medical treatment, while emphasizing the need for further high-quality clinical research.

An interpretative phenomenological study exploring the lived experiences of women Yoga Prana Vidya healers in India reported that the journey to becoming a healer involves profound personal transformation, development of a service-oriented identity, and enhanced spiritual awareness. The study also highlighted the challenges of balancing family expectations, societal roles, and healing service. Participants described that limited family support and reduced opportunities for service adversely affected their emotional wellbeing, whereas spiritual practice, community support, and a sense of purpose fostered resilience and personal growth (15).

Despite growing evidence supporting YPV as a complementary healthcare system, there is limited literature describing recovery among experienced practitioners who themselves develop severe depression. This case report presents the recovery of a long-term female Yoga Prana Vidya practitioner who developed severe depression, malnutrition, and psychosomatic illness in the setting of prolonged family resistance to her healing activities, social isolation, and nutritional deficiency, while continuing conventional medical care.

Yoga Prana Vidya Ashram, Sri Ramana Trust

The Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) Ashram, Sri Ramana Trust, located at Thally, Krishnagiri District, Tamil Nadu, India, serves as the principal residential training and spiritual centre for the Yoga Prana Vidya system. The ashram provides an environment dedicated to holistic living, spiritual discipline, meditation, self-transformation, and selfless service. It offers structured residential programs designed to enhance the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of participants while preparing them for community service through Yoga Prana Vidya.

One of the flagship programs conducted at the ashram is the One-Year Spiritual Intensive Program, designed exclusively for senior Arhat Yogis. Under the guidance and mentorship of

Shri N. J. Reddy and Smt. N. Jyothi Reddy, participants undergo intensive Group training in advanced meditations, inner purification techniques, study & validation, spiritual discipline, character building, and selfless service. The program aims to facilitate profound inner transformation, strengthen spiritual awareness, and prepare practitioners to contribute effectively towards humanitarian service in alignment with the vision and mission of the founder of Yoga Prana Vidya.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Yoga Prana Vidya Ashram initiated a series of daily online spiritual and healing sessions conducted by Shri N. J. Reddy through Facebook Live and YouTube Live. These virtual sessions were introduced to provide emotional support, spiritual guidance, meditation, and healing to individuals affected by the pandemic and its associated psychological stress. Owing to their positive reception and continued benefit, these sessions have been sustained beyond the pandemic and are now attended daily by Yoga Prana Vidya practitioners as well as members of the general public from different parts of the world.

The daily online programs, which are open to all typically includes:

- Morning Sadhana at 7.15 am IST, comprising physical exercises, rhythmic yogic breathing, spiritual teachings, positive affirmations and planetary peace meditation to channel energies to mother earth, to promote physical vitality, emotional wellbeing, harmony, mental clarity and for spiritual upliftment.
- 10:00 AM Divine Group Healing Session, during which collective healing prayers and no-touch energy healing are offered by YPV healers and trainers for individuals requiring support for physical, psychological, emotional, and social challenges.
- Afternoon Great Invocation Session, involving group recitation of the Great Invocation prayer after rhythmic yogic breathing with the intention of invoking and channeling peace, harmony, healing, and goodwill for humanity.
- Evening Metta Meditation Session, featuring physical exercises, rhythmic yogic breathing, and guided Metta Meditation for upliftment of all beings, aimed at reducing stress, enhancing inner peace, and fostering spiritual growth.

These online sessions have become an integral component of the Yoga Prana Vidya community, providing continuous opportunities for spiritual practice, collective healing, emotional resilience, and community support for both experienced healers and the wider public.

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CASE REPORT AND INTERVENTION

Case Presentation

A 58-year-old female, an experienced Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) practitioner, successfully completed the One-Year Spiritual Intensive Program for senior Arhat Yogis at the Yoga Prana Vidya Sri Ramana Trust Ashram, Thally, Tamil Nadu, in 2019. After completing the program, she returned home in March 2020 with renewed enthusiasm, emotional stability, and a strong commitment to community service through Yoga Prana Vidya. She actively participated in the Ashram's daily online Morning Sadhana, Divine Healing, Great Invocation, and meditation sessions and conducted online YPV Level-1 program.

Over the following years, she experienced several psychosocial challenges. Her increasing involvement in healing activities and spiritual service was not well accepted by family members, resulting in reduced emotional support and frequent discouragement. Simultaneously, opportunities for voluntary service declined, leading to social isolation and a progressive loss of purpose. During this period, she also adopted a highly restrictive diet with inadequate caloric intake, resulting in progressive malnutrition and weight loss from 44 kg to 37 kg.

The cumulative effects of these psychosocial stressors and nutritional deficiency were associated with progressive deterioration in her physical and psychological health. She developed severe depressive symptoms characterized by persistent sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, suicidal ideation, generalized weakness, chronic fatigue, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction, diffuse body pain predominantly affecting the right side, and markedly reduced functional capacity. The patient reported that these symptoms significantly affected her physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing.

Despite her deteriorating condition, she remained connected with the YPV community. Because of profound weakness and poor concentration, she was unable to actively participate in many practices but continued attending the daily online Morning Sadhana and listening to the Divine Group Healing sessions while carrying out routine household activities. She reported that remaining connected to these sessions provided emotional reassurance during her illness.

The patient described a pivotal experience during one Morning Sadhana when she heard the Guru's message: *"No one needs you, but the Guru needs you. Work for Him."* She interpreted this message as restoring her sense of purpose and hope, motivating her to gradually resume spiritual practices and selfless service.

Following this experience, she progressively re-engaged in regular YPV practices and later attended a two-month residential Yoga Prana Vidya program at the Ashram during march-may 2026. Throughout this period, she continued prescribed conventional medical treatment, improved her nutritional intake, and received healing prayers and emotional support from fellow YPV practitioners.

RESULTS

Progressive clinical improvement was observed over the two-month follow-up period post two months residential program. Alongside continued conventional medical treatment, nutritional rehabilitation, regular Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) practices, daily participation in the online Ashram sessions, and healing prayers and emotional support from fellow practitioners, the patient's body weight increased from 37 kg to 54 kg, blood pressure stabilized at 129/75 mmHg, thyroid function normalized, and generalized body pain and fatigue were markedly reduced. She also reported substantial improvement in depressive symptoms, anxiety, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation, with restoration of emotional wellbeing and renewed hope.

Functional recovery was evidenced by her ability to independently perform activities of daily living, care for her hospitalized father, complete an online Vedic Mathematics course, and actively resume Yoga Prana Vidya practices and community service. The patient attributed her recovery to the combined influence of conventional medical care, improved nutrition, sustained YPV practices, continued participation in the YPV community, and the renewed sense of purpose gained through her spiritual journey. No adverse events related to the complementary interventions were reported during follow-up.

DISCUSSION

Depression is increasingly recognized as a biopsychosocial disorder in which recovery depends not only on pharmacological treatment but also on psychological resilience, social connectedness, and a sense of purpose⁽¹⁶⁾. The present case illustrates the importance of these factors in a woman whose depressive illness developed in the setting of prolonged psychosocial stress, including lack of family support for her spiritual vocation, social isolation, and reduced opportunities for meaningful service. Qualitative research among women Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) healers has similarly highlighted that family expectations, societal roles, and limited support can create emotional challenges, whereas spiritual practice, community participation, and service foster resilience, identity, and psychological wellbeing. The patient's experience is consistent with these observations and suggests that maintaining engagement with a supportive spiritual community may be valuable during periods of severe emotional distress.

The daily Morning Sadhana and Divine Group Healing sessions may have provided a structured environment for emotional regulation, self-reflection, and social connectedness. Morning Sadhana incorporates physical exercises, Rhythmic Yogic Breathing, forgiveness practices, and Planetary Peace Meditation (PPM), a guided meditation intended to cultivate inner peace, compassion, and mental clarity. Previous studies have reported that regular PPM practice is associated with reduced stress, improved

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concentration, emotional balance, and enhanced overall wellbeing⁽¹⁷⁾. Similar positive effects on psychological wellbeing have also been reported with the regular practice of the Great Invocation, which has been associated with improvements in mental peace, emotional stability, positive thinking, and interpersonal harmony among participants.

CONCLUSION

This case highlights the complex interaction between psychosocial stressors, family support, nutritional status, and mental health in the development and recovery of severe depression. The patient's experience suggests that Yoga Prana Vidya, when integrated with conventional medical care, nutritional rehabilitation, and community support, may enhance resilience, restore a sense of purpose, and facilitate functional recovery. Although causality cannot be established from a single case, the present report contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting further investigation of Yoga Prana Vidya practices as complementary interventions for psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery from depression

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express sincere thanks to the healer for sharing her personal case details and feedback. The authors also thank Sri Ramana Trust (Thally-635118, Tamil Nadu, India) for granting permission to use the copyrighted terms Yoga Prana Vidya System® and YPV®.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support or funding for this study.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this work.

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