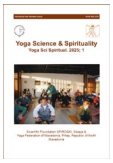
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Published Papers about Yoga in the Scopus Database (2025)

Mirko Spiroski[1,2*], Pavlos K. Hassanagas[3,4]

[1]Medical Faculty, Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia; [2]Scientific Foundation SPIROSKI, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia; [3]Aluminox, 33 Ifestou, Koropi, PC 19400, Greece; [4]Yoga Science Centre for Integral Education and Holistic Health - Athens, Greece

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***Correspondence:** Mirko Spiroski. Scientific Foundation SPIROSKI, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. E-mail: mirkospiroski@foundationspiroski.eu
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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Contemporary scientific research has demonstrated that yoga exerts measurable effects on numerous physiological systems, including autonomic regulation, immune activity, neuroendocrine balance, and musculoskeletal functioning

AIM: The aim of this study was to present current state of indexed papers about yoga in the Scopus database in order to understand the connection of yoga with science and spirituality.

METHODS: A search of the Scopus database was performed on November 07, 2025, in order to identify published papers from the yoga documents in all fields of Scopus. A total number of 71,875 documents were found. All documents were included in the analysis of the number of published documents about yoga.

RESULTS: First document about yoga was published in 1904 with very small increase of published papers till 2003. From 2003 to 2005 there is very big increase in the indexed papers in the Scopus database with more than 8K papers published in 2025. On the first place of the number of published documents about yoga in the Scopus database is International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, followed by the journals Frontiers in Psychology, and Plos One. In most of the published papers there is no author ID found. The biggest number of published papers about yoga relates to the author Cramer, H. (201 papers). Harvard Medical School published the biggest number of papers connected with yoga. Most of published documents about yoga in the Scopus database published researchers from United States, India, United Kingdom, China, and Australia. Published papers from the former Yugoslav republics about Yoga are on the lower part of the scale with Croatia on the first place, followed with Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Most of the published papers about yoga are articles with the subject area medicine. International Journal of Yoga Therapy is the only journal devoted to yoga and indexed in Scopus database.

CONCLUSION: The number of publications included in Scopus database from the field of yoga continuously was present from1904 with the sharp increase between 2003 and 2025 year.

Introduction

Yoga represents one of the oldest and most influential systems for understanding the human mind, body, and spirit. Originating in the Indian subcontinent, Indus Valley, Harappan culture more than 5,000 years ago (steatite seals which was uncovered in Mohenjo-daro around 2600 BC), yoga evolved as a holistic discipline integrating physical training, breath regulation, ethical principles, and contemplative practices aimed at achieving inner balance and transcendence of ordinary consciousness [1], [2]. Historically, yoga was preserved in classical texts such as the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, each offering systematic frameworks for self-cultivation, moral development, and spiritual liberation [3]. Over the last century, yoga has undergone a profound global transformation, expanding from a primarily spiritual tradition to a multidisciplinary field studied within psychology, neuroscience, public health, and integrative medicine [4], [5], [6].

The first scientific yoga institutions in the world were The Yoga Institute in Santacruz, Mumbai, founded in 1918 by Yogi Sri Yogendra Ji, as well as the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute and Research Centre in Lonavla, founded by Swami Kuvalayananda in 1924. A significant role in modernizing the image of yoga was played by T. Krishnamacharya (1888-1989).

Over time, following the initiatives of scientific centers that conducted research, the organization of scientific gatherings and congresses began. The first congress on Yoga and Ayurveda, held in the Republic of San Marino from June 8 to 11, 1985, was led by the congress president, Prof. K. N. Udupa from Banaras Hindu University, with secretary general Georgio Barabino, after which other international congresses followed. After Udupa's death, the position of president was assumed by Prof. Dr. Stibor Dostalek, who was also the vice-president of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and a professor at Charles University. With the estabishment of the World Federation of Yoga and Ayurveda, global collaboration was further strengthened. Such events represent an excellent opportunity for exchanging new insights and contemporary research related to the benefits of yoga World Federation of Yoga, Ayurveda and Holistic Medicine.

Contemporary scientific research has demonstrated that yoga exerts measurable effects on numerous physiological systems, including autonomic regulation, immune activity, neuroendocrine balance, and musculoskeletal functioning [7], [8]. Neuroimaging studies have shown that regular yoga and meditation practices modulate neural circuits involved in attention, emotional regulation, and self-referential processing, particularly within the prefrontal cortex, insula, and default mode network [9], [10], [11].

These findings support long-standing yogic claims that disciplined mental training reshapes patterns of awareness and fosters states of sustained clarity, equanimity, and introspection [12]. From a biomedical standpoint, yoga is now increasingly incorporated into clinical interventions for managing stress, anxiety, depression, chronic pain, hypertension, psychosomatic, metabolic disorders and in prenatal and postnatal education [13], [14], [15].

Equally important is yoga's philosophical and spiritual dimension, which addresses existential questions concerning consciousness, suffering, and human flourishing. Yogic spirituality emphasizes the cultivation of ethical living (*yama* and *niyama*), the harmonization of body and mind, and the realization of one's deeper nature (*ātman*) as interconnected with a greater universal reality (*brahman*) [16], [17]. Unlike dogmatic systems, yoga privileges direct experiential knowledge (*pratyakṣa*) through introspection and meditative absorption. This experiential orientation has positioned yoga as a bridge between ancient contemplative traditions and modern scientific inquiries into the nature of consciousness, subjective experience, and well-being [18], [19].

The emerging field of contemplative science seeks to integrate empirical research with these rich spiritual traditions. Scholars argue that yoga provides a comprehensive model for understanding human potential, combining evidence-based practices with ethical frameworks that encourage compassion, self-awareness, and psychological resilience [20], [21]. As global interest in holistic and integrative health continues to grow, yoga stands at the intersection of science and spirituality, offering tools not only for disease prevention and mental health but also for cultivating purpose, meaning, and self-transcendence.

The aim of this study was to present current state of published papers about yoga in the Scopus database in order to understand the connection of yoga with science and spirituality.

Material and Methods

A search of the Scopus database was performed on November 07, 2025, in order to identify published papers from the yoga documents in all fields of Scopus. A total number of 71,875 documents were found. All documents were included in the analysis of number of published documents about yoga: by year, by the first 20 journals, by the first 20 authors, by the first 20 institutions – affiliations, by the first 20 countries, by the former Yougoslav countries, by the type, and by subject area.

Results

The analysis of yoga documents published and indexed in Scopus database is presented by the original analysis of the documents from the Search and Analysis of the results (November 07, 2025).

Distribution of the published documents about Yoga in the first 20 journals is presented on Table 1. On the first place is International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (610 papers), followed by Frontiers in Psychology (600 papers), and Plos One (519 papers). On the 20th place is Frontiers in Public Health with 198 published papers.

Table 1: Number of published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database in the first 20 journals (2025)

SOURCE TITLE	Number of published papers
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	610
Frontiers in Psychology	600
Plos One	519
Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine	419
Mindfulness	402
Complementary Therapies in Medicine	358
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews	311
Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice	310
Scientific Reports	310
Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine	280
Religions	272
Evidence Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine	264
Frontiers in Psychiatry	260
Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies	252
Supportive Care in Cancer	250
BMJ Open	230
International Journal of Yoga Therapy	221
Healthcare Switzerland	212
Journal of Clinical Medicine	206
Frontiers in Public Health	198

Documents published by year show that first document about yoga was published in 1904 with very small increase till 2003. From 2003 to 2005 there is very big increase in the indexed papers in the Scopus

database with more than 8K papers published in 2025 (Figure 1a).

The number of published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database by the first 20 authors is shown in Figure 1b. We can see that the most of published papers (513 papers) there is no author ID found. The biggest number of published papers about yoga is connected with Cramer, H. (201 papers), following with Telles, S. (181 papers), Yoganandan, N. (155 papers), Nagendra, H.R. (142 papers), and Nagarathna, R. (107 papers).

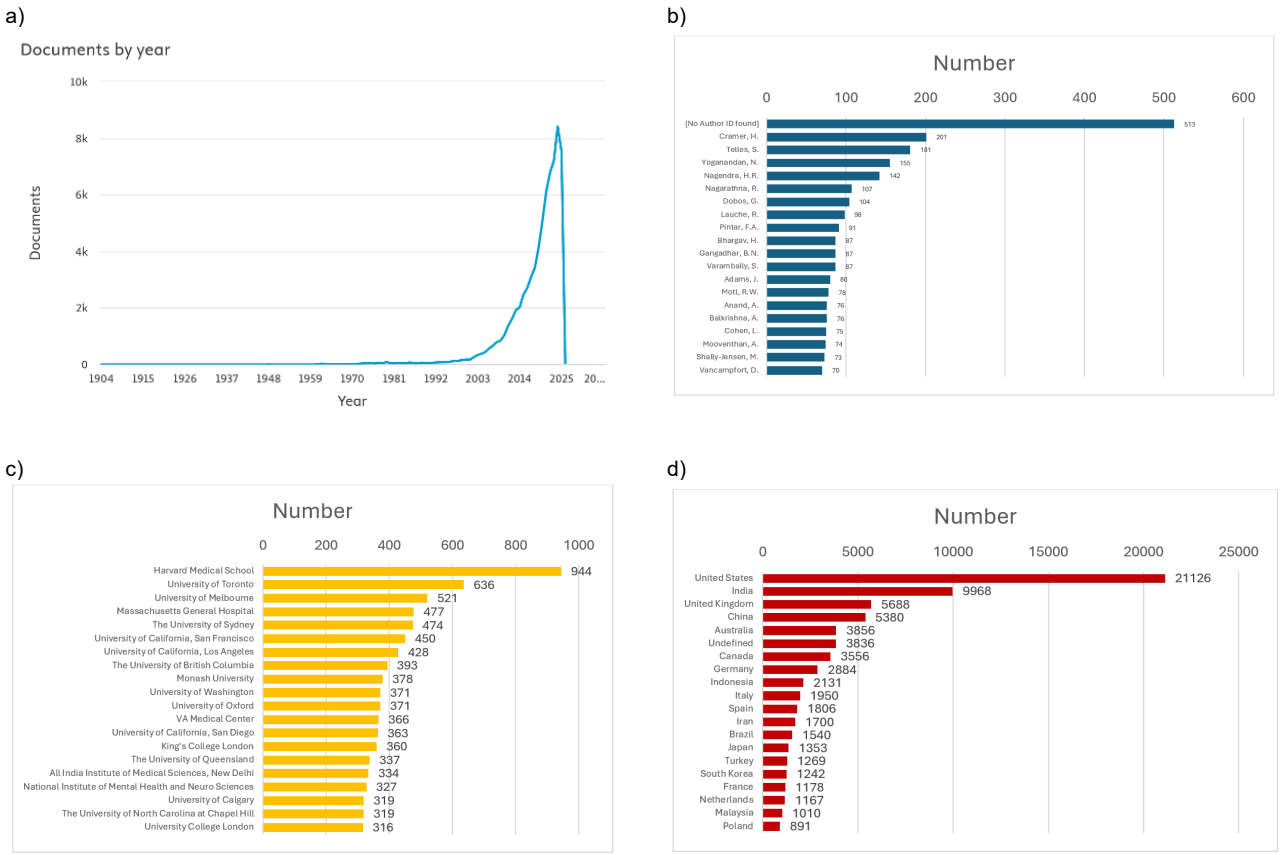


Figure 1: Published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database: a) by year (2025); by the first 20 authors; c) by the first 20 institutions – affiliations; d) by the first 20 countries

The number of published documents about yoga in the Scopus database by the first 20 institutions – affiliations is shown in Figure 1c. The biggest number of published articles about yoga is published by the Harvard Medical School (944 papers), followed with University of Toronto (636 papers), University of Melbourne (521 paper), Massachusetts General Hospital (477 papers), and University of Sydney (474 papers).

The number of published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database by the first 20 countries have shown that the biggest number of published papers were published by the researchers from United States (21,126 papers), followed by the India (9,968 papers), United Kingdom (5,688 papers), China (5,380 papers), and Australia (3,856 papers). On the 20th place is Poland with the 891 published papers (Figure 1d).

The number of the published papers from the former Yugoslav republics about Yoga are on the lower part of the scale with Croatia on the first place (122 papers), following with Serbia (118 papers), Slovenia (107 papers), Bosnia and Herzegovina (38 papers), Montenegro (10 papers), and North Macedonia with 7 papers (Figure 2).

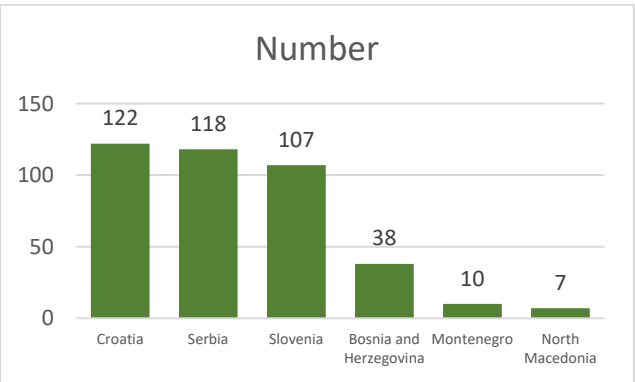


Figure 2: Number of published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database by the former Yugoslav countries (2025)

Most of the published papers about Yoga are articles (60.2%), followed with the review papers (17.6%), Book Chapters (9.4%), Conference Papers (4.5%), Books (4.1%) and others (Figure 3a).

Subject area Medicine took first place (31.5%), in the second place are Social Sciences (10.5%), the third place belongs to Psychology (8.5%) and other areas are less than 8.0% (Figure 3b).

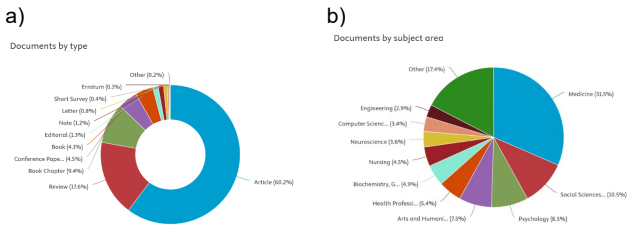


Figure 3: Number of published documents about Yoga in the Scopus database: a) by the type; b) by subject area (2025)

International Journal of Yoga Therapy (ISSN: 1531-2054, eISSN: 2168-5835, published by International Association of Yoga Therapists, United States) is the only journal devoted to yoga and indexed in Scopus database. The journal was included in Scopus from 2011-2013 and from 2016-2025. This is Q2 journal with CiteScore 2024 of 1.7, SJR 2024 of 0.357, SNIP 2024 of 0.384, and Hirsh Index 2024 of 21 (Figure 4).

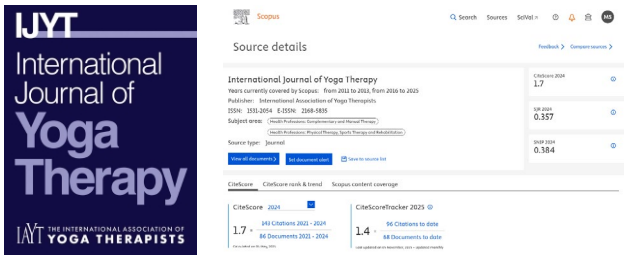


Figure 4: Scientific journal about Yoga investigations indexed in the Scopus database (2025)

Discussion

The present analysis of yoga-related documents indexed in the Scopus database provides the most comprehensive overview to date of global research productivity, disciplinary trends, and institutional contributions in the field of yoga science. Several important patterns emerge from bibliometric results, reflecting the rapid evolution of yoga from a primarily philosophical and spiritual discipline to a multidisciplinary scientific domain spanning medicine, psychology, neuroscience, public health, and integrative health sciences [1], [4], [22], [23].

Growth of Yoga Research Since the Early 2000s

The temporal distribution of publications demonstrates that yoga research remained minimal for nearly a century after the first published paper in 1904. A dramatic expansion occurred beginning around 2003–2005, followed by exponential annual growth, exceeding 8,000 publications in 2025. This surge parallels the global rise of complementary and integrative medicine research, as well as increased interest in mind–body interventions within clinical and neuroscientific contexts [24], [25], [26].

Several factors likely contributed to this inflection point: (a) the spread of modern postural yoga worldwide; (b) the establishment of research institutions dedicated to yoga therapy in India and the United States; (c) increased funding for non-pharmacological and lifestyle-based interventions; and (d) growing recognition of yoga as a low-cost, evidence-supported approach to stress reduction and chronic disease management [27], [28], [29]. The observed trend is consistent with bibliometric analyses showing steep increases in research output on meditation, mindfulness, and other contemplative practices during the same period [30], [31].

Journals and Research Visibility

The distribution of publications across journals reveals that yoga research is disseminated primarily through multidisciplinary outlets rather than yoga-specific journals. The *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (610 papers), *Frontiers in Psychology* (600 papers), and *PLOS One* (519 papers) are the most prolific, collectively accounting for a substantial proportion of all yoga-indexed documents. These journals are known for broad thematic scopes and acceptance of health-related and behavioral science research, suggesting that yoga is increasingly studied as a public health and psychological intervention [32], [33], [34].

First yoga journal on scientific research was "Yoga-Mimamsa" from Kaivalyadhama Institut, Lonavla, India. But only one specialized journal—*International Journal of Yoga Therapy*—is indexed in Scopus. Despite its relatively modest output, its Q2 ranking and stable scientometric indicators (CiteScore 2014 = 1.7; SJR 2014 = 0.357) indicate sustained recognition of yoga therapy as a legitimate clinical field [35]. The dominance of non-specialized journals further suggests that yoga research is deeply embedded within larger discourses of lifestyle medicine, stress physiology, mental health, and integrative care.

Authors and Institutions

Authorship analysis confirms that yoga research is shaped by a combination of established academic researchers and a large proportion of publications without identifiable author IDs—likely conference papers, institutional reports, or publications with incomplete metadata. Among identifiable authors, Cramer, H. (201 papers), Telles, S. (181 papers), Yoganandan, N. (155 papers), Nagendra, H.R. (142

papers), and Nagarathna, R. (107 papers) dominate the field.

Many of these authors are associated with major yoga research centers in India (e.g., S-VYASA, NIMHANS) or with institutions specializing in integrative medicine and mind–body research [36], [37], [38]. Their sustained output underscores the importance of dedicated research ecosystems combining laboratory facilities, clinical operations, and educational programs centered on yoga and related therapies.

Institutionally, Harvard Medical School leads with 944 papers, followed by the University of Toronto, University of Melbourne, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the University of Sydney. These institutions are global leaders in public health, psychiatry, oncology, and rehabilitation sciences—areas where yoga-based interventions have accumulated strong evidence [39], [40], [41]. Their involvement is likely reflecting the integration of yoga into clinical research on chronic pain, supportive cancer care, psychiatric conditions, and preventative health.

Regional Disparities

The United States contributes the largest share of yoga publications (21,126 papers), followed by India (9,968 papers), the United Kingdom, China, and Australia. This distribution correlates with the geographic expansion of modern yoga and the prominence of mind–body research programs in North America and Western Europe [42], [43]. India's position as the birthplace of yoga and host of many traditional and modern research institutions naturally contributes to its high productivity. The strong presence of China is notable and likely related to its rapidly expanding integrative medicine infrastructure and comparative studies between yoga and traditional Chinese practices such as qigong and tai chi [44].

In contrast, countries from the former Yugoslav region show comparatively low publication output, with Croatia (122 papers), Serbia (118 papers), and Slovenia (107 papers) leading modestly, and Macedonia producing the fewest publications (7 papers). This regional gap may reflect more limited institutional funding, fewer dedicated complementary medicine research centers, and less integration of yoga into national health or academic systems. Similar patterns have been documented in bibliometric analyses of other complementary therapies in Southeastern Europe [45].

Document Types

Most yoga documents are research articles (60.2%) and reviews (17.6%), confirming the dominance of empirical and evidence-based scholarship. Book chapters (9.4%) and books (4.1%) indicate ongoing scholarly interest in theoretical, historical, and philosophical dimensions of yoga, while conference papers (4.5%) reflect active participation in international academic networks.

The subject-area distribution is led by Medicine (31.5%), followed by Social Sciences (10.5%) and Psychology (8.5%). This disciplinary composition is consistent with the modern reconceptualization of yoga as a therapeutic, behavioral, and psychosocial intervention rather than solely a spiritual or religious practice [10], [46], [47]. Fields such as neuroscience, rehabilitation, nursing, and psychiatry increasingly examine yoga's mechanisms and effects on neuroplasticity, stress pathways, autonomic regulation, and mental health outcomes [7], [48], [49].

Future of Yoga Research

The sustained rise in yoga publications and their diversification across disciplines indicate that yoga has achieved stable scientific legitimacy within the global research community. The breadth of research—from molecular biomarkers and brain imaging to epidemiology, education, and spirituality—suggests yoga's potential as a comprehensive biopsychosocial-spiritual approach to health [21], [50]. However, the dominance of Western institutions and the relative underrepresentation of smaller countries such as those in the Balkans highlight the need to support emerging regions through collaborative networks, training programs, and dedicated funding.

Future research may benefit from:

- expanding randomized controlled trials and mechanistic studies;
- research in the field of categorization, systematization, and standardization of the educational profile of teachers, as well as the curricula of general education—but especially in yoga therapy and specialized educational programs in yoga for children and youth, for various professional profiles, for children with special needs, for athletes, astronauts, and similar groups. The aim is to prevent incompetence, improvisation, and superficiality.
- standardizing yoga interventions and reporting guidelines;
- strengthening cross-cultural research, especially between India and Western institutions;
- addressing publication biases toward clinical and quantitative studies;
- increasing representation from under-studied regions.

Conclusions

Overall, the bibliometric findings confirm that yoga research is transitioning from a niche area into a global interdisciplinary field with substantial scientific, medical, and societal relevance.

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