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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Effects of a Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention on Reducing Eye Strain Among Young Adults with Prolonged Screen Time: A Randomized Pilot Trial

Hongxiu Chen, Tanapat Ratanapakorn, Manichaean Sukonpatip, Somkiat Asawaphureekorn, Xingze Wang, Beibei Wang, Wichai Eungpinichpong

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

4 comments · 4 Feb 2026 – 7 Feb 2026

Referee 1 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 4 Feb 2026

This manuscript, titled "A Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention to Reduce Eye Strain in Young Adults Engaged in Prolonged Screen Use: A Randomized Pilot Trial," is a well-structured and methodologically rigorous randomized controlled trial report. The following are detailed review comments on its overall quality and potential issues. 1- The sample size is relatively small (15 participants per group), and the participants are young adults aged 18-35, resulting in high homogeneity. Extrapolation of conclusions should be approached with caution. It is recommended that the authors clearly state in the discussion that this is a preliminary study and that future studies should use a larger sample and include a broader population. 2- In this study, the control group consisted of "resting with eyes closed for 15 minutes." While the duration was controlled, the absence of a placebo-controlled or sham massage as an active control may introduce the expectation effect. It is recommended that the authors clearly state this point in the "Study Limitations" section and recommend that future studies use a placebo control. 3- It is recommended that the authors emphasize in the conclusion that this is a "short-term effect" and that future long-term follow-up studies are needed. 4- The text repeatedly mentions mechanisms such as "improved ocular blood flow" and "promoted lymphatic circulation," but this study did not directly measure these physiological indicators. Please state in the discussion that these mechanisms are "hypothetical" and require verification through imaging or biochemical indicators in future studies. 5- Some abbreviations were not explained when they first appeared (such as RMSSD and PNN50); these should be explained in the methods section.

Sincerely,

Referee 2 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 7 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, 1. Recommended Title: Effects of a Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention on Reducing Eye Strain Among Young Adults With Prolonged Screen Time: A Randomized Pilot Trial. 2. Kindly check the keywords in the MeSH database. The keywords should be in this database.

Associate Editor

MINOR REVISION 7 Feb 2026

Dear Editor, The manuscript entitled “A Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention to Reduce Eye Strain in Young Adults Engaged in Prolonged Screen Use: A Randomized Pilot Trial” requires minor revision. Best regards,

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 7 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, Based on the reviewers' comments, the manuscript (ID: 169874) requires a minor revision. Sincerely,

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Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Reviewers' Comments:

Reviewer 1:
This manuscript, titled "A Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention to Reduce Eye Strain in Young Adults Engaged in Prolonged Screen Use: A Randomized Pilot Trial," is a well-structured and methodologically rigorous randomized controlled trial report. The following are detailed review comments on its overall quality and potential issues.

1- The sample size is relatively small (15 participants per group), and the participants are young adults aged 18-35, resulting in high homogeneity. Extrapolation of conclusions should be approached with caution. It is recommended that the authors clearly state in the discussion that this is a preliminary study, and future studies should expand the sample and include a broader population.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this valuable comment. In accordance with the reviewer's suggestion, we have clarified in the Discussion section that the present study should be regarded as a preliminary (pilot) trial due to the small sample size and the relatively homogeneous population of young adults. We have also emphasized that the findings should be interpreted with caution and highlighted the need for future studies with larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the results (Discussion).

2- In this study, the control group consisted of "resting with eyes closed for 15 minutes." While the time was controlled, the absence of a placebo-controlled or sham massage as an active control may introduce the expectation effect. It is recommended that the authors clearly state this point in the "Study Limitations" section and recommend that future studies use a placebo control.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this insightful comment. We agree that although the intervention duration was controlled, the absence of a placebo-controlled or sham massage condition may have introduced expectation effects, which could influence both subjective outcomes and physiological responses. Accordingly, we have revised the Study Limitations section to explicitly acknowledge this limitation. In addition, we now recommend that future studies incorporate placebo-controlled or sham massage designs to better isolate the specific effects of the yoga-based facial massage intervention.

3- It is recommended that the authors emphasize in the conclusion that this is a "short-term effect," and that future long-term follow-up studies are needed.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this valuable suggestion. In response, we have revised the Conclusion section to explicitly emphasize that the observed effects of the intervention reflect short-term outcomes. We now clearly state that further research incorporating long-term follow-up is necessary to evaluate the persistence and sustainability of these effects.

4- The text repeatedly mentions mechanisms such as "improved ocular blood flow" and "promoted lymphatic circulation," but this study did not directly measure these physiological indicators. Please state in the discussion that these mechanisms are "hypothetical" and require verification through imaging or biochemical indicators in future studies.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this important comment. We agree that the proposed mechanisms, including improved ocular blood flow and promoted lymphatic circulation, were not directly assessed in the present study and should therefore be interpreted as hypothetical. Accordingly, we have revised the *Discussion* section to explicitly clarify that these mechanisms are speculative in nature and based on prior literature rather than direct measurement. We have also added a statement emphasizing that future studies employing imaging techniques or biochemical indicators are needed to verify these proposed physiological pathways.

5-Some abbreviations were not explained when they first appeared (such as RMSSD and PNN50); these should be explained in the methods section.

Response: We thank the reviewer for pointing this out. In response, we have revised the Methods section to clearly define all heart rate variability (HRV)–related abbreviations at their first appearance. Specifically, we now provide full definitions for RMSSD (root mean square of successive differences) and PNN50 (percentage of successive normal-to-normal intervals differing by more than 50 ms), along with other commonly used time-domain and frequency-domain HRV indices.

Reviewer 2:
Dear Authors,
1. Recommended Title: Effects of a Yoga-Based Facial Massage Intervention on Reducing Eye Strain Among Young Adults With Prolonged Screen Time: A Randomized Pilot Trial.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this helpful suggestion. We have revised the manuscript title in accordance with the reviewer’s recommendation to improve clarity and readability.

2. Kindly check keywords in MeSh database. The keywords should be in this database.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this helpful suggestion. The keywords have been revised according to the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) database, and only MeSH-indexed terms are now used.

2 Revision 1

3 comments · 20 Feb 2026 – 22 Feb 2026

Referee 2 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 20 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, • The following two keywords are not in MeSH: Digital Eye Strain, Heart Rate Variability. • It is suggested that the importance of yoga in preventing headaches and illness be emphasized in various sections of the manuscript, especially the abstract and conclusion. • Kindly check all references, including journal names, issues, and volumes. Best,

Associate Editor

MINOR REVISION 21 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, Based on the reviewer's comments, the manuscript requires minor revision. Best,

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 22 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, Best,

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Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Reviewers' Comments

Comment 1:
Dear Authors,
• The two key words are not in Mesh: Digital Eye Strain, Heart Rate Variability.

Response:

Thank you for this important comment. After carefully reviewing the official MeSH database, we found that “Digital Eye Strain” is not listed as a MeSH Descriptor. Therefore, it has been replaced with the appropriate MeSH term “Asthenopia.” In addition, “Heart Rate Variability” was removed from the keywords to ensure strict compliance with MeSH terminology. To better reflect the intervention characteristics, we added the MeSH term “Yoga” to the keyword list. All keywords have now been revised to align with official MeSH descriptors.

Comment 2:
• It is suggested that the importance of yoga in preventing headaches and illness be discussed in various sections of the manuscript, especially the abstract and conclusion.

Response: Thank you for this valuable suggestion. We have revised the manuscript to better highlight the broader relevance of the yoga-based nature of STYFM. Specifically, we strengthened the rationale in the **Introduction** by clarifying that yoga-based mind–body approaches are commonly applied for stress regulation and autonomic modulation, which are relevant to computer vision syndrome and its extraocular symptoms. In the **Abstract (Conclusion)** and the **main Conclusion**, we further emphasized that, beyond reducing visual fatigue and improving musculoskeletal and autonomic-related indicators, STYFM **may also help mitigate stress-related and extraocular symptoms associated with prolonged screen use (e.g., headache)**.

Comment 3:
• Kindly check all references. Journal name, issue, volume

Response: Thank you for the comment. We carefully checked and standardized the reference list according to the journal style. Journal titles were corrected, and bibliographic details (volume and issue where applicable, and page range or article number) were completed. For online resources/software, URLs and access dates were added.

3 Revision 2

1 comment · 24 Feb 2026

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 24 Feb 2026

Dear Authors, The revised manuscript is acceptable. Sincerely,