

Beth Whitney-Teeple, PhD, RYT-500

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"The exciting thing about yoga research is that we're not just learning about what works. We're exploring new ways of knowing as well."

- Beth Whitney-Teeple

Dr Beth Whitney-Teeple's research interests were early and varied - from "Barbiturate Toxicity in Lions" (M. Bush and E. Teeple, Journal of Zoo Animal Medicine, 1975) to the far less exciting "Power Failure in Information Systems - A Quantitative Risk Analysis" (Proceedings of the Hawaii International Systems Symposium, 1983). At Texas A&M she participated in studies to preserve endangered species, at the National Institutes of Health she was part of pioneering research in embryo transfer. She then turned her attention to human health care and medical informatics (thus the 1983 citation above), completing her doctorate at The George Washington University in Federal Health Policy and Bioethics. As a U.S Air Force officer working in the research Office of the Surgeon General, she analyzed care patterns of providers and the over 9 Million beneficiaries of the Department of Defense.

Throughout this eclectic career, Beth has been a yoga practitioner and a student of the Viniyoga tradition and has studied extensively with Gary Kraftsow. She is certified as an AVI Vinyoga Teacher (RYT 500) and an AVI Vinyoga Therapist, completing these programs in 2006 and 2009 respectively. Yoga has nourished her for 30+ years.

In 2004, while serving at Madigan Army Medical Center, Ft Lewis, WA, Dr. Whitney-Teeple had the opportunity to marry her interests in yoga, health services, and research. Beth joined her colleague, Principal Investigator Dr. Mona Bingham, in the pursuit of a US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM) grant to study the effect of yoga as an adjunct to traditional medical intervention. Their pilot study proposal was accepted and together they designed and operated the Yoga Experience for Soldiers (YES). The target population: those soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who were experiencing chronic pain, though the common denominators of the eventual group were chronic pain plus insomnia and, in yoga parlance, citta vrtti. They found the soldiers receptive to the idea of yoga and the US Army Medical staff supportive. The yoga intervention was based on Vinyoga principles of repetition and stay emphasizing awareness of and moving with the breath. The results of the study were positive. Though not a measure of the study, Drs Whitney-Teeple and Bingham were particularly impressed by the soldiers' resolute willingness to explore alternate ways to manage their suffering. Further details and the analysis of this pilot study were presented at SYTAR 2007 and are available in the proceedings.

Following this research, Dr Whitney-Teeple went on to offer yoga to the staff of the Mental Health Department at MAMC. Holding a space for the caregivers of the suffering continues to be an area of interest for her and a possible realm for future research.

Today Beth pursues her multiple interests, serving yoga as a teacher, Yoga Therapist, and AVI staff member. Now retired from the Air Force, she is an independent consultant in health care information systems and health services research. She supports research grant applications of her colleagues and is excited about the initiatives that partner yoga and the military.



"We started with chronic pain as the major focus in Yoga Experience for Soldier (YES), but quickly discovered that there were common denominators among the participants of insomnia, fragmented thinking, and a simple inability to find stillness. If they were snoring at the end, I considered it success!"

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