

Effect of iRest/ Yoga Nidra on a College Student Population

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Introduction

Integrative Restoration (iRest) is derived from the ancient meditation practice of yoga nidra. iRest is a guided practice that focuses on breathing techniques, body sensing, emotional relaxation, and guided consciousness meditation. Pilot studies testing the effect of iRest on participants with PTSD, chronic pain, asthma, emphysema, and homeless populations have shown promising results¹. In collaboration with these studies, The Evergreen State College has conducted pilot studies on the effect of iRest on the well being of college student to serve as the control data for the other studies².



Hypothesis

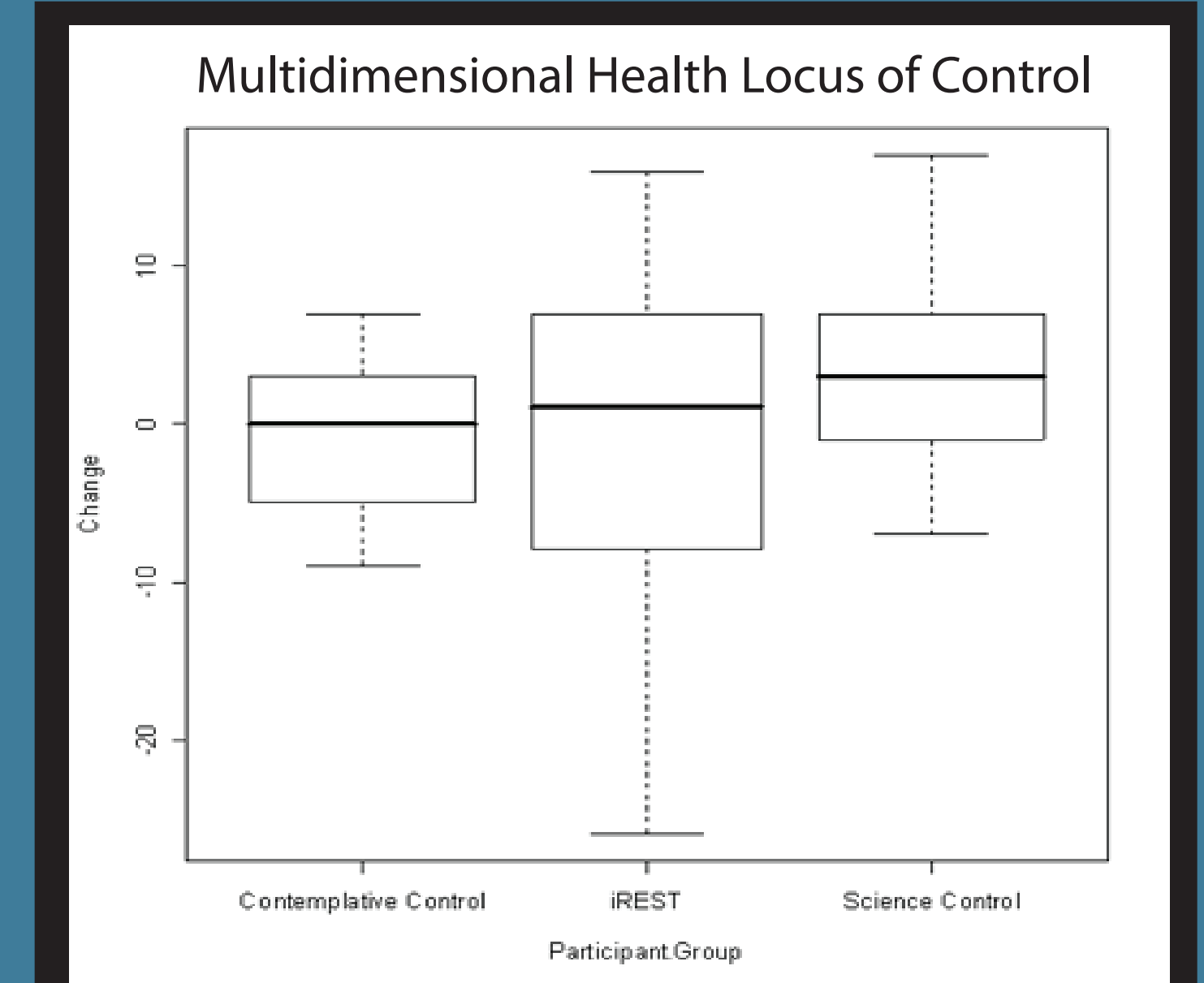
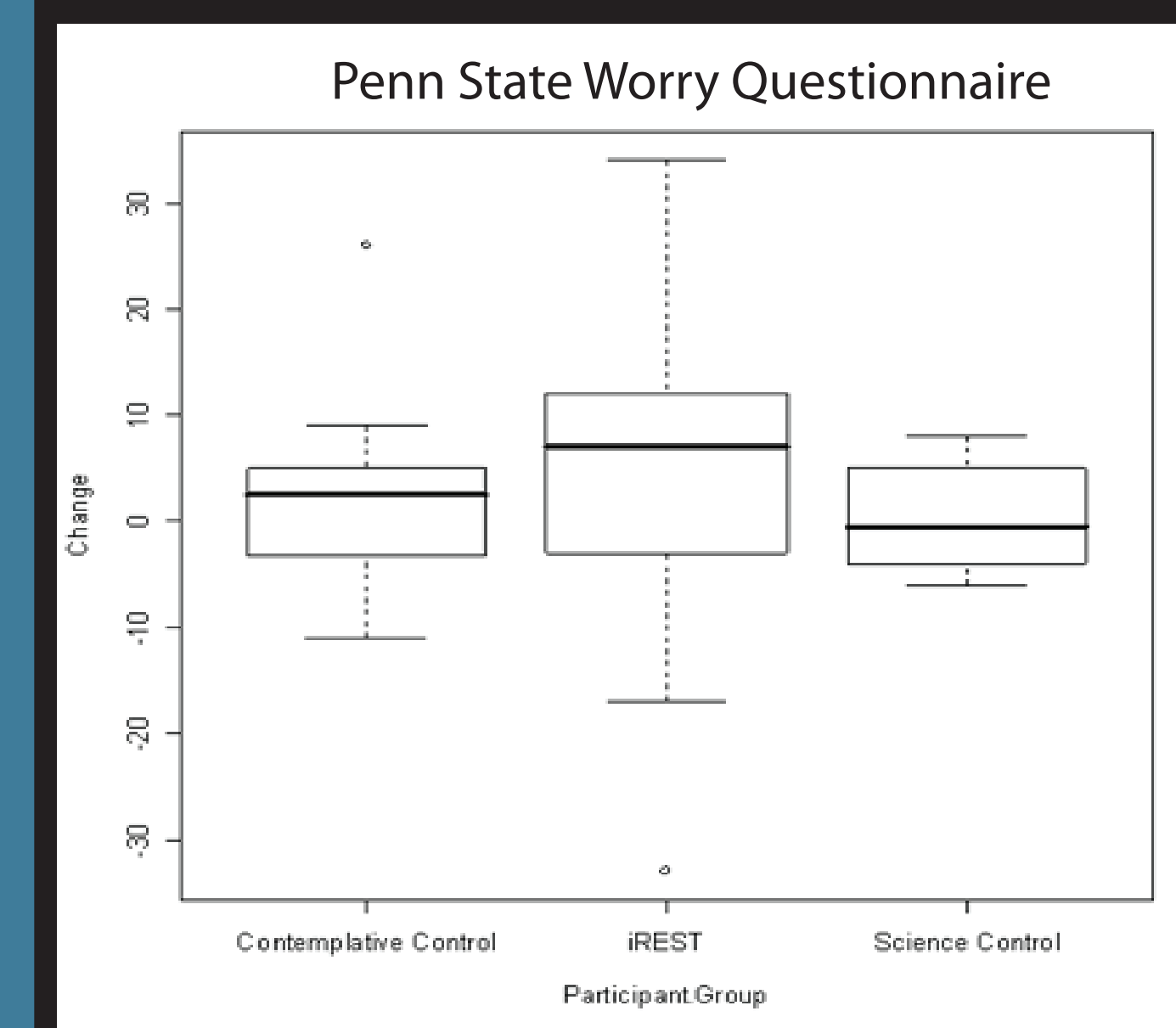
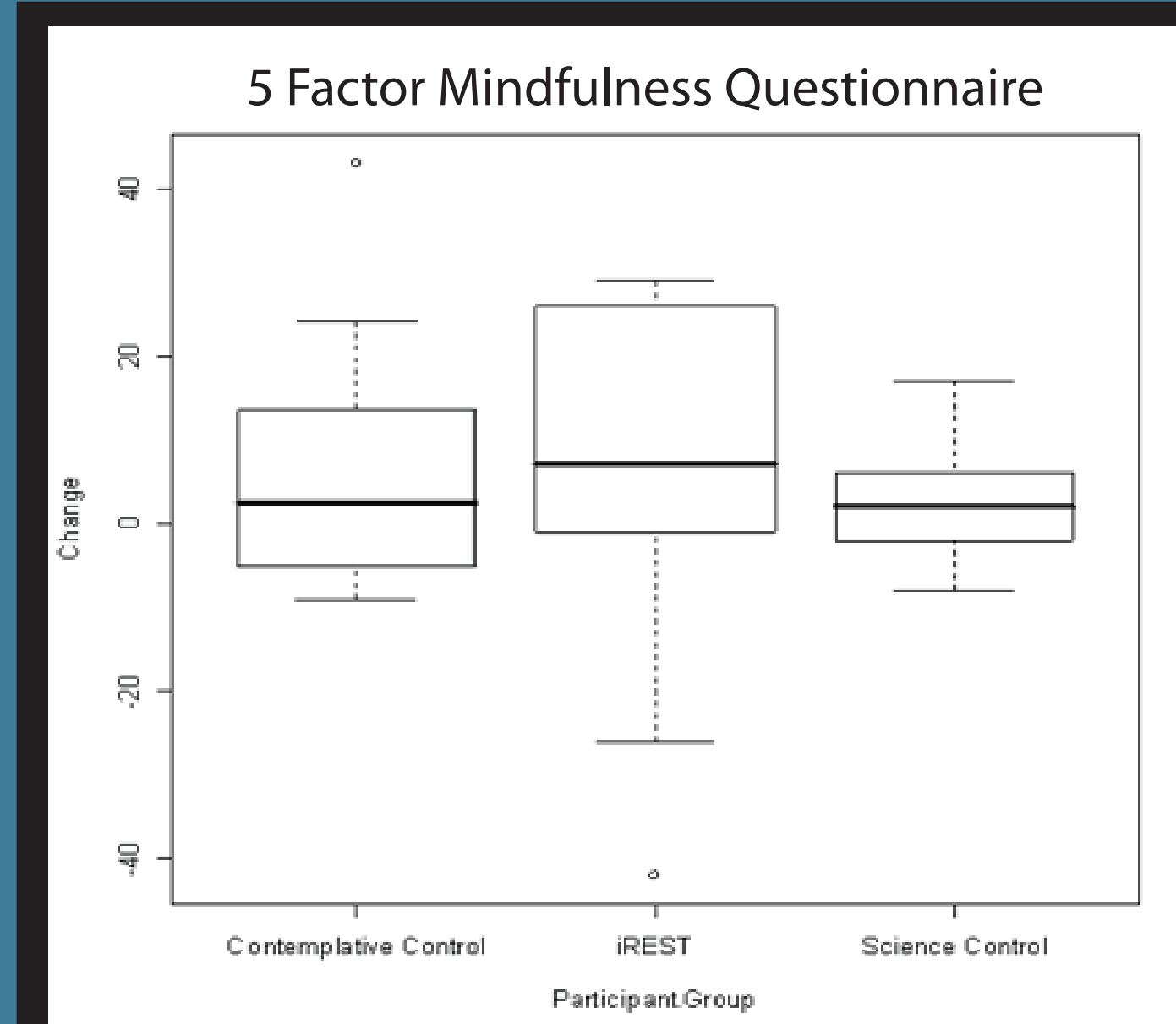
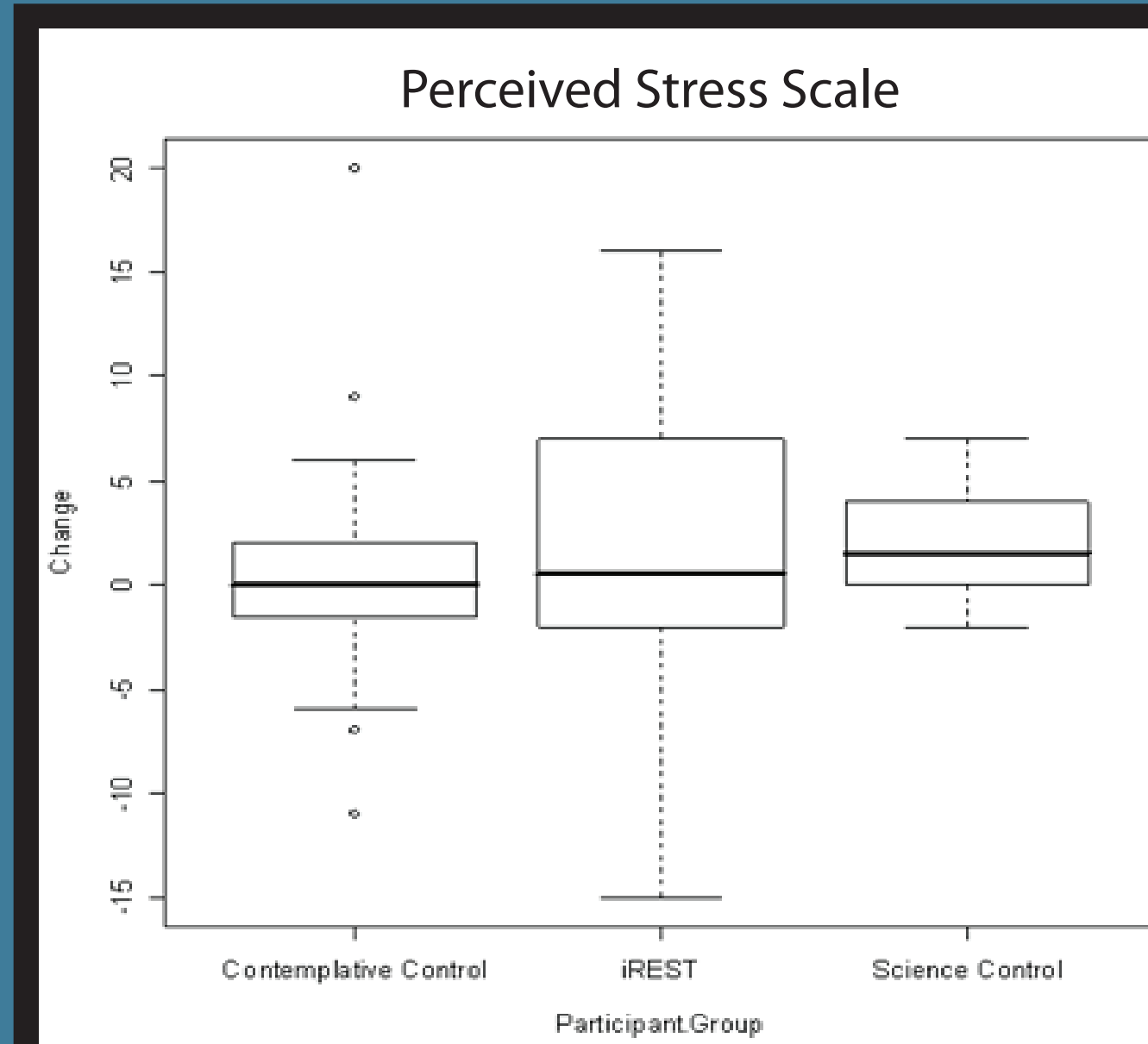
1. iREST participants would exhibit greater control & mindfulness, and less worry & perceived stress over time.
2. iREST participants would exhibit a greater variation in response than either control group.

Methods

The Study was comprised of Evergreen undergraduate students in full time programs. The participants in the treatment group practiced iREST as part of their course work, once weekly in class and twice weekly at home. The participants in the 2 control groups did not practice iRest. All participants completed 4 surveys (Perceived Stress Scale, 5 Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire, Penn State Worry Questionnaire, and Multidimensional Health Locus of Control) at similar time points, before and after 1st and last session of iRest. Total scores were found by subtracting the 1st survey total from the 2nd, reflecting positive change. Participants were tracked anonymously over time by self generated ID codes. The study upheld a 95% completion standard. Data was entered in Excel and analyzed in R program.

Results

1. iRest participants did not exhibit greater control & mindfulness or less worry and perceived stress.
2. iRest participants exhibited a greater variation in response than either control group.



| | ANOVA P-Value | F Test P-Value |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Perceived Stress Scale | 0.088 | 0.013 |
| 5 Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire | 0.109 | 0.001 |
| Penn State Worry Questionnaire | 0.659 | 0.001 |
| Multidimensional Health Locus of control | 1.138 | 0.001 |

| | N | N _{total} |
|-----------------------|----|--------------------|
| Contemplative Control | 24 | 50 |
| iREST | 14 | 18 |
| Science Control | 10 | 15 |

Discussion

Mean changes were not found in this study as expected, yet greater variation in response was found at high significance. Originally conceived as a comparative study on a non-diagnosed, non-diseased population relative to target, traumatized populations, the appropriateness of this comparison is being reconsidered. College students in a program that promotes consciousness studies and promotes the exploration are likely practicing iRest for radically different reasons than a person seeking treatment for PTSD, etc, and may be a curious control for these populations.

The limitations of this pilot study were significant. Students self-selected to iRest and showed higher prior experience with meditation practices. Future studies could randomly assign participants. Qualitative data from iRest participants exhibited high significant impact from before to after that were not reflected topics in the quantitative 4 surveys.

This too, shows the need for future studies.

¹ iRest is a registered trademark. Miller, Richard 2005, *Yoga Nidra: The Meditative Heart of Yoga*, Sounds True. www.nonduel.com

² Krucoff, Carol 2007 "Class Act" Yoga Journal, September, p. 26.

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Photo: iRest Practice
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