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**EXPERIENCE REPORT
OF ONLINE PRACTICES
OF ZHINENG QI
GONG IN GROUP:
PRELIMINARY
RESULTS OF BENEFITS
REGISTERED BY
ELDERLY**

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Abstract: The objective of this work is to present the Preliminary Results of a research that we started when accompanying elderly people who voluntarily and free of charge participate in a Zhineng Qi Gong Practice Group, which is an activity that involves Relaxation (Field Organization), Light Physical Activities (Methods and Body Practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine) and suitable and adaptable to the physical conditions of each person, which allows people of any age or with physical limitations to perform. It was developed and has been disseminated throughout the world since the 1980s by Doctor Pang Ming, PhD, Doctor trained in Western Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), University Professor and Founder of several Study and Research Centers. in China, for example, in Xian. In China there are thousands of practitioners, scholars and researchers who have disseminated these practices that today have benefited from them all over the world. In Brazil, this practice has been disseminated in the last five years through Professor Oscar Silva, from Mexico, and Cassiano Takayassu, from São Paulo. We participated in an Instructor Training Course in Zhineng Qi Gong, Levels 1, 2 and 3, with Teachers from the Center for Studies and Research of Xian and in February 2022 we disseminated, through Whatsapp, the Free Online Practice Group, with activities four times a week. We had several applications, especially from the elderly. During and after the practices we have followed the development of improvements in physical problems (less pain in the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions), as well as more vitality, more energy and joy in the state of mind. So, we set up a questionnaire adapted from other research to report these results and share with the scientific community. We also discussed the possibility of taking this Practice On Line, possibly through SUS structures, to

more people, especially the elderly, aiming to bring greater well-being and more longevity with quality of life.

Keywords: Full article, Scientific standards, Congress, Accomplish, Good luck.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that to develop studies in the Social Sciences, “the Sciences of Dialogic” (LOPES, 2001), it is necessary to use four parameters: Connectivity, Passion, Confrontation and Horizontality, mainly in the case of a study that involves syncretism, it remains for the researcher to communicate, to relate in order to be able to appropriate and share knowledge from different sources, that is, it is advisable to have multidisciplinary approaches. In this work we present an experience report where knowledge was acquired online about Zhineng Qi Gong (doctor), during the pandemic, with teachers from China, and then, it has been shared online, free of charge, with open practices and students of middle age (34 to 67 years) spread across Brazil, Latin America and Portugal.

Qigong is a practice of exercises with the body, mind and spirit, belonging to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with at least 8000 years of systematization. One of the most famous Classical Physicians of TCM, Hua Tuo (163 AD), was one of the pioneers in its systematization. In the second half of the 20th century, the Chinese government organized special commissions to study and propagate Qi Gong at the provincial and national levels due to the good results that practitioners had in maintaining their health. After several records and surprising results in curing and preventing diseases, important stimuli began for the practice of this therapy outside the academies and family and community centers, spreading through public parks, also in hospitals (WONG, 1996).

So, we are talking about one of the areas of Medicine Training at the Universities of China, Qi Gong (chi kung), which means skill developed through theoretical and practical studies, which results in the control of the flow of internal vital energy known by the Chinese as Qi (chi). In order to obtain health benefits, medical Qi Gong is used, as it has therapeutic effects of health recovery and healing, which is a practice that emphasizes relaxation that facilitates the circulation of Qi, as well as controlling the respiratory rhythm, the coordination of smooth body movements, and the proper mental attitude. These qualities, put into practice in a conscious and coordinated way, generate the differential of Qi Gong therapy (JAHNKE, 2002).

We know that regular physical activity has many positive effects on health. Despite this, approximately 50% of all adults do not exercise enough to enjoy better health and may therefore need an alternative to vigorous physical exercise. Qi Gong offers a gentle and safe way to exercise the body; an alternative practice to vigorous exercises when the objective is longevity, health and well-being with more quality of life (JOUPEL, HASSMEN and JOHANSSON, 2006).

To justify the execution of this work, we recall what GALLAGHER (2003) says, that “evidence shows that the practice of Qi Gong is a preventive and rehabilitative therapy on cardiorespiratory conditioning, generating a significant impact also on quality of life”. All this motivated us to develop this work with the elderly for free, but we envision a much greater reach, and quoting Latour (2009) “[...] what we manufacture always surpasses us”, because we act in the present, but the future will reverberate this work.

The objective of this work is to present the Preliminary Results of a research that we are carrying out to accompany elderly people who participate voluntarily and free of charge

in a Zhineng Qi Gong Practice Group, which is an activity that involves Directed Relaxation (which in Zhineng Qi Gong is called of Field Organization), light Physical Activities (Methods and Body Practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine - TCM), adequate and adaptable, which allow people of any age or with physical limitations to perform.

The Practice of Zhineng Qi Gong was developed and has been disseminated, since the 1980s, throughout the world by Doctor Pang Ming, PhD, Doctor trained in Western Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine, in several Studies and Research Centers founded by him and his followers in China, for example in the city of Xian. In China there are thousands of practitioners, scholars and researchers who have disseminated these practices that benefit thousands of people and also around the world. The Instructor Training Course we did was delivered/translated in seven languages: Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Hebrew, and German.

In Brazil, this practice has been disseminated in the last five years through Professor Oscar Silva, from Mexico, and Cassiano Takayassu, from São Paulo, and Professors and Masters from the Studies and Research Center in Xian, China, and now, in addition to them, fifteen newly graduated Instructors spread across Brazil, among them, we, who are teaching classes from João Pessoa, state of Paraíba, in the Northeast region.

METHODOLOGY

This is an Exploratory, Experimental (and experiential) Research, with the application of Ethnomethodology, which has its origins in the Social Sciences, and must be considered when the researcher also participates in the sample universe surveyed. In addition to having an intrinsic interest in the Research results.

So, we set up a questionnaire adapted from SOUZA; COSTA, BOTECCIA, Et alli (2010), which covers the following domains: 1) Profile of the interviewee; 2) Benefits of bodily practices (physical well-being; social interaction; spirituality; mental health).

The Inclusion Criteria to participate in the Research were the following: 1) To be part of the online Practices group of Zhineng Qi Gong; 2) Be 45 years of age or older; 3) Participate in group activities for at least three months; 4th) Have a minimum attendance of 50% in the months from March to June 2022. Thus, we would have fifteen people who met the inclusion criteria. On the other hand, we had thirteen who, voluntarily and for accessibility, responded.

The Questionnaire was created in Google Forms, containing 25 questions covering the Domains mentioned above, with space for discursive answers that take between fifteen and twenty minutes to be answered. The questionnaire link was sent through Whastapp groups of Zhineng QiGong Practitioners from Brazil and Latin America on June 14, 2022, and responses made until June 20, 2022 were computed. The answer to the questionnaires was voluntary and for accessibility. It could be using a Personal Computer, Notebook, or cell phone. We had 13 responses in the period.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Doctor Pang Ming, PhD, was the systematizer and founder of ZhiNeng Qi Gong. He began his studies of the Science of Qi Gong when he was a child. He researched and practiced with nineteen Grand Masters of different styles/schools of Qi Gong while, as a teenager, he was already studying Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine, having completed these courses when he turned seventeen. He worked in Hospitals and Clinics until, through his Research and

Practices, he came to the conclusion that the human being could cure himself from any and all ills, imbalances and diseases only through Qi Gong practices. So he abandoned the other resources of Chinese Medicine, such as needles, moxibustion, massage, and started to treat his patients exclusively with Qi Gong that he continued to practice and teach to his patients, who managed to recover their health and, many times, continued to learn from him until they were able to become multipliers of those practices, of what he called the Science of Qi Gong, which later, in the eighties, received the name of Zhineng Qi Gong. He is currently a PhD and University Teacher in China, a Grand Master of Qigong and a renowned practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine having founded several Centers for Zhineng Qi Gong Studies, Research and Practices. He wrote more than twenty books about this subject. He left medicine to do Qigong research, and breaking with the traditional teaching way of Qi Gong, when a Master would chose a couple of disciples to teach, and in the 1980s, by creating a new open form of practice that could be taught to a large numbers of people at once, he started his new way of teaching Qi Gong. In the 1990s, he and his team founded the largest Hospital (Hua Shia) with donations, for free treatment, drug-free treatment, near Beijing. People stayed in treatment, studies and practices of Zhineng Qi Gong for thirty days and from there they came out cured of all their ills, illnesses and physical, mental and emotional problems. They used Zhineng Qi Gong exclusively for the treatments. In the late 1990s, Hua Shia Hospital was already receiving 10,000 people a month for its treatments, when the Chinese Government ordered it to close.

In the late 20th century, ZhiNeng Qi Gong was rated as the most effective Qi Gong system in China, with around ten million

practitioners. It was the first form based on systematic theory and scientific research, and the first to adopt the use of the Qi Field (Vital Energy Field that permeates everything that exists, composed of infinitesimally sized particles, that create everything and transforms everything) for teaching and healing of various imbalances. As CSORDAS (2008) says, healing is a phenomenon that happens in the body, but also in the mind and spirit of the person.

ZhiNeng Qigong arrived in the West ten years later, where teaching mainly focused on the practice of sequential Methods of physical and mental activities. This has enriched many lives, but it has also brought limitations. As it is a Science of Life, ZhiNeng Qigong includes several levels of practices and techniques, but also Kung Fu (a type of exercise that leads to mastery of skills, through effort, dedication and persistence in practice) and The Dao, area of study of Chinese Philosophy, about the whole and everything that exists and its repercussion in our daily lives. To practice the Methods without an understanding of the Theory is to receive limited benefit (MING, 1994). This is far from ZhiNeng Qi Gong's purpose of providing tools to bring about real health, self-awareness and freedom from illnesses to the practitioner and to mankind. A fixation on movement techniques will leave people striving only to improve their level of practice. The purpose of ZhiNeng Qi Gong is to contribute to the improvement of the health and longevity of people, who must use their Consciousness and Responsibility, for their choices and actions, and for the evolution of Human Beings, helping them to achieve autonomy and freedom, in terms of well-being, longevity and life quality. The Hunyuan Theory of Wholeness (MING, 1994) is the basis for human improvement. It is not a theory that is applied only to a small field of practice, but a theory that builds an

advanced view of human culture. As such, it can be used to guide any practice focused on the health of the body and mind, be it Qi Gong, taiji, yoga, or any other.

Citing LIVRAMENTO and LIVRAMENTO (2010), the focus is on strengthening the individual as an organic Mind-Body unit, favoring biopsychic integration, health and its construction as a human citizen. In this dimension, Chinese Medicine – specifically Qi Gong – has two important characteristics that justify the need for its full use, dissemination and popularization in the West. On the one hand, it consists of a millenary practice consecrated and experienced by several generations, constituting a heritage of humanity aimed at the preservation of vital capacity and health. On the other hand, Qi Gong is a therapeutic practice that can be understood, learned and practiced by people with relative ease, despite its complexity, breaking with the passivity of Western health treatments and with the restricted access to preventive and holistic practices.

Listening "... makes the semantic horizons of confrontation – between the researcher and the native - open to each other, in a way that transforms such a confrontation into a true "ethnographic encounter" (OLIVEIRA, 1996, p. 24 apud SILVEIRA, 2018), p. 342). This has been our quest, to interact, to be in relationship with the practitioners of the online group and, over time, we have created bonds, friendship, and today we can say that we are strengthening a healthy level of dialog and relationship, even at a distance. The Social Scientist relates and communicates. Participants in this group follow this line.

According to Hankey (2006), for the scientific world, Qi Gong has being seen as a new Life Promotion Science, so it must be further researched.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In preparation for the development of this research, we participated in a (medical) Zhineng Qi Gong Instructor Course, with Professors from the Xian/China Study and Research Center, which began in January 2021 and ended in December 2021, Levels 1 and 2. In February 2022, we announced, through Whatsapp, the opening of a Free Online Zhineng Qi Gong Practice Group for people of all ages, with activities four times a week (Mondays and Wednesdays from 7 am to 8 pm and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6 am to 7 am). We had several applications, especially from the elderly. Today we have 122 inscriptions on the group.

During and after the practices, we have followed the development of improvements in physical problems related by many participants (less pain in the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions), balance of emotional problems (better stability when reacting to situations that arouse strong emotions), as well as greater vitality, more energy and joy of living in the state of mind.

Aiming to record and share these experiences, we developed this work, initially to be presented at the IX International Congress on Human Aging, July 2022, in Campina Grande, Paraiba, Brazil. And now we extended the contents to present here.

Considering that, as stated in the Methodology, the questionnaire link was sent through Whastapp groups of Zhineng QiGong Practitioners from Brazil and Latin America on June 14, 2022 and the responses made until June 20, 2022 were computed. The answer to the questionnaires could be done voluntarily, for accessibility, using a Personal Computer, Notebook, and also a cell phone. We had 13 responses in the period.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF SOME QUESTIONS

In the initial survey, we found that we had six male and six female respondents. The mean age was 60.07 years. As for the place where the practitioners live, the distribution was as follows: seven in different cities on the Northeast of Brazil; three in the Southeast, two in the Midwest and one lives in Chile. Only two were unaware of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practices. That is, the vast majority of respondents already had some experience with MTC technologies.

Here are some more specific questions and answers:

(12) WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO JOIN THE GROUP?

Answers:

- a) The opportunity for new knowledge and physical activity, I participate four times a week;
- b) At first, curiosity was the main motivation. In addition to the fact that it is online. Afterwards, the motivation was the desire to know better and more deeply;
- c) The result I obtained with acupuncture and the scientific information on the effect of the practice on blood pressure;
- d) Peace of mind. Free flow of Qi;
- e) The biggest motivation was to share with others the well-being and health improvements that I started to experience after practicing Zhineng QiGong with great frequency.

In general, people have been looking for the ease of online access. But, as can be seen in the answers, after reaching a certain level of self-perceived physical and mental results, this motivation changes and the person allows himself to go deeper into the experiences and can reach different levels of more health and expansion of consciousness.

(13) HOW DO YOU FEEL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE ONLINE ZHINENG QI GONG PRACTICE?

Answers:

- a) Very well; I feel very good;
- b) I felt very sad, depressed and Zhineng brought me joy and the desire to practice Qi Gong again, my body became much faster and I feel my muscles are in order;
- c) Basically, I feel interested in doing the Practices. Afterwards, a feeling of well being and peace; Well disposed !!;
- d) Very good;
- e) The best energies are feeling after a time of practice, my vision has improved a lot for days that I don't need glasses;
- f) Before: discouragement and tiredness. After: calmer and happier;
- g) The practice requires concentration and physical effort. I think due to lack of experience. The immediate effect is relaxation.;
- h) Very good!; I had some reactions of retching, yawning, localized pain, salivation. After improvements in sleep, but general mood and well being.;
- i) Before is always an awakening. When we start the Field Organization and the Practices, my Body - Mind starts to flow, nourishing itself with Qi (vital energy), and it doesn't want to stop. I have had several profound experiences with the practices of Zhineng QiGong. Some I can't describe, but we managed to activate a lot of vital energy.

It appears that the most frequent reactions are WELL BEING, especially after. It is worth mentioning that some practitioners with more experience may report some differentiated benefits, for example, the decrease in the degree of glasses or Special States, deeper Qi Gong state. These processes are expected to occur, as the increasing accumulation of this vital energy allows for the recovery of health

and the feeling of youth.

We also discussed the possibility of taking this Practice On Line, possibly through the SUS (Public Health Care organization in Brazil) structures, to more people, especially the elderly, aiming to bring greater well-being and better quality of life.

(15) STILL QUOTING THE RESULTS OF ONLINE PRACTICES: WHAT PARTS OF YOUR BODY DO YOU NOTICE THAT ARE DIFFERENT?

Answers:

- a) Better neck, lower back, bladder, softer skin.; A) spine, B) neck, C) shoulder. Now I'm much better in every way.;
- b) More developed muscles and without lower back pain and sciatic problems, the neck muscles are much less tense;
- c) Mainly the lumbar spine. Pains in this region were frequent and after the Practices, such frequency decreased significantly.;
- d) Neck better than trunk and lumbar; more flexible and stronger; Heated hands, stronger body.;
- e) Before more rigid.;
- f) Better general functions in the body.;
- g) The kidneys and hemorrhoids were sometimes sensitive, they are no longer speaking out. Only the shoulder when abuse in its function.;
- h) The three segments of the spine, where I, occasionally, had some painful crises (cervical, dorsal and lumbar). Also my entire body feels more toned, strong, flexible and with good resistance.

How good it is to be able to contribute to the improvement of our health and of those who are having this opportunity. In the concluding notes we indicate that we intend to expand the reach of these practices to more people, especially linking them to the SUS and, possibly, working with specific groups, such as the elderly, among others.

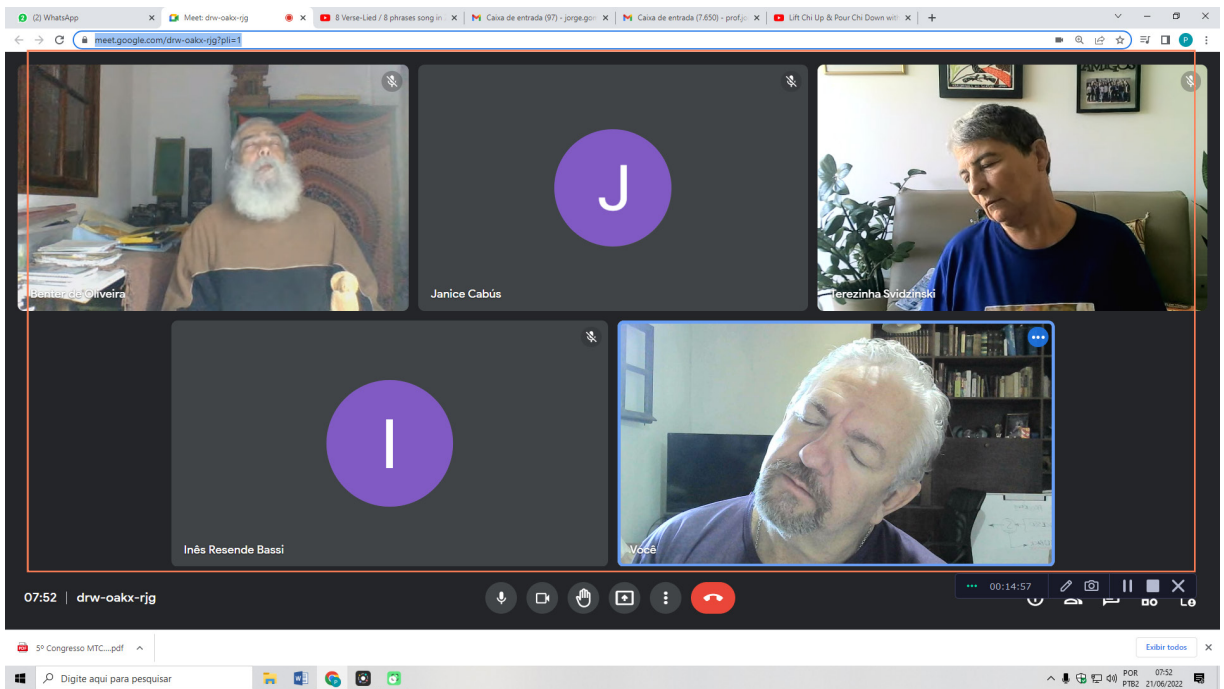


Figure 1: Image captured during Zhineng QiGong Online Practice

Source: Current Research.

(24) DO YOU THINK THAT THESE ACTIVITIES MUST BE OFFERED TO ALL SENIORS?

Answers:

- a) Yes, because it is a simple practice that works the whole body, promoting health and is low cost.;
- b) Yea.; Undoubtedly, elderly people end up losing a lot of their friends, family, because we have a busy life and full of problems, elderly people need to participate in groups and feel belonging, welcomed and especially doing exercises that bring many benefits!
- c) Yup. For providing due attention to this phase - Aging - with caution, joy, realism and respect for the particularities of the body and mind.;
- d) Yes, they can adapt to any age.;
- e) Yea.; Yea.;
- f) Yup. It is important to improve the lifestyle for all people and at all ages.;
- g) Yup. Very important to promote the

- improvement of the elderly's quality of life.;
- h) No doubt! Because they greatly help in all aspects of the health of the elderly: improving cognition, posture, movement, ambulation, perception of life.;
- i) Not only for the elderly, these practices are good, I believe anyone who practices it, providing countless improvements for health as a whole.;
- j) Certainly. In China, there are already 40 million people performing this type of practice and the result is more health, freedom, autonomy, longevity.
- k) Yes, for all ages, including to help face physical, emotional, mental and relationship imbalances.

We all deserve a dignified life and this technology is available and now, with the use of technological resources, including by friends of the elderly, we are an army of a few million citizens waiting to have access to these Online Practices.

The Brazilian population lives in a frank process of aging, forging the need to adapt the mechanisms of health promotion and recovery. The increase in longevity is a gain of the last centuries, but living longer does not represent only victories, given that aging is characterized by several organic, physiological, immunological, psychological changes, which facilitate the installation or worsening of chronic and debilitating diseases. In general, curative medicine attacks this already naturally weakened system. Thus, the development and dissemination of healthy living practices is essential. Among others, Qi Gong, still little practiced in Brazil, represents an excellent way of accessing health promotion, including for the elderly. It is a low-cost, holistic practice, accessible to all, that promotes direct benefits in the physical and mental health of its practitioners.

The elderly are vulnerable to situations of distress, uncertainty, panic and mental disorders such as depression, insomnia and anxiety. Conditions worsened by the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which implied a change in behavior with direct repercussions on mental health, with high levels of irritability, fatigue, insomnia, especially in the elderly. The high mortality rates of the elderly, at the beginning of the pandemic, generated fear of death. In addition, the measures of confinement and consequent isolation of the elderly, depriving them of social interaction with friends, family, financial insecurity, brought to light the importance of mental health care in this segment of society (Monteiro et al., 2021). This group started activities with the pandemic still in full swing and the benefits felt and reported by the elderly participants were visible. In the group we have some practitioners who had COVID, but this is a subject for another research.

Let's seek to live with more health and well-being, strengthening our Living System, our

Environment, recovering and appreciating nature, which is tremendously generous in providing us with access to its resources, which is where this Vital Energy (Qi) manifests itself in its natural form. Original, where everything can be a resource for our transformation, evolution, conscious longevity. Live the life!

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

During and after the practices, we have followed the development of improvements in physical problems (less pain in the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions), as well as greater vitality, more energy and joy in the state of mind specially in elderly people, as we could see in the answers of this research.

As Future Works, we aim to get in touch with the official segments that disseminate the Integrative and Complementary Practices in Health (PICS) to take this activity through the Structures of the SUS, as well as through the UFPB, where I am a professor, to the Servers as a way of self-care, and through an Extension Project, taking this content to the community outside the UFPB as another opportunity to take care of their Health and Quality of life.

As stated by Bourdieu (2002, p.33)

[...]it is necessary to escape the alternative of "pure science", totally free from any social need, and of "slave science", subject to all political-economic demands. The Scientific Field is a social world and, as such, it makes impositions, requests, etc., which are, however, relatively independent of the pressures of the global social world that surrounds it. [...] and external pressures, of whatever nature, are only exerted through the field, they are mediated by the rules and logic of the field.

The field of scientific research on the Zhineng Qi Gong is restricted to the few works that have already been developed in China, a people with more than twenty thousand years of existence. Let's build bridges

with this contact, meetings, experiences and interactions: all *sui generis* that we have long recorded in this work and in others in the near future.

As we are taking care of Nature, the main original and natural source of Qi, we are taking care of all life on the planet. We need to awaken our Conscience, choose and act with more responsibility for our life processes, as Viktor Frankl said, connecting us with a greater Meaning of Life that is beyond us. The essence of this work is to share, to divide in

order to multiply the good experiences and good information that is another form of manifestation of Qi.

Therefore, Zhineng Qi Gong, that is still little practiced in Brazil, represents an excellent access route to health promotion for the elderly. It is a low-cost, holistic practice, accessible to all, which promotes direct benefits in the physical and mental health of its practitioners. In addition, it can be practiced remotely, bringing together people from various regions of Brazil and the world.

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