

Effect of Yoga on Mental and Physical Health: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

Yoga, the gift of our Rishi culture, is a science and art of life style. Yoga therapy includes special techniques for treatment without medicines. Systematically disciplined life along with practice of yoga postures help to cure many diseases. This study was conducted to examine the effect of various yoga postures in the lifestyle of ordinary house wives living in a rural area. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to promulgate the importance of yoga in everyone's life. One who got the taste of it, must discourse it, thereby filling the ignorant mind with divine light of consciousness.

Keyword: Yogasana; Mental Health; Pranayama; Healthy life.

Introduction

According to the Hatha yoga perspective, disease is caused by an imbalance of mind and body. Yoga considers health in terms of prana and when prana blocks, diseases begin. Balanced prana ensures complete health. According to WHO, health means a complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing to lead a socially and economically productive life and not merely the absence of disease. Wherever the mind and body are balanced, there is positive health. To prevent illness or to cure it, yoga therapy is efficient. Illness is an indication given by nature to give care to own body. One who dedicates whole heartedly for practising it, has good health the costly wealth.

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Methodology

This study was conducted in a college setting. Selected site was Manarcadu which is about 10.5 km east from Kottayam, Kerala. St Mary's College Manarcad aims at the total development of the rural suburb of Manarcadu through the upliftment of the weaker section of the society by providing education of global standards. Appropriate permissions from the college authorities were obtained before starting the practices. A group of forty house wives were selected for this study. They were in the age group of 40 to 60 and were coming from various living conditions. Before starting the practice sessions, they were asked to note down the body weight, diseases they have for which they are having medicines, small ailments of the body, or any other mental issues that can't be controlled by self. Study period was June to March 2018. There was one hour theory and demonstration class and one hour yoga practices. Theory class follows a written syllabus covering differing aspects of yoga. Syllabus includes anatomy of our body, mental discipline, reactions of body to any kind of toxins such as negative thoughts etc. Special care was given to ladies with some ailments connected to heart, blood pressure, Anaemia etc. A total of sixty-five asanas including

Sooryanamaskar, Pranayama, Meditation was taught. Practice sections were mainly focussed on self-concentration, importance of divine power above us and also in heart. Instructions were given to the participants and were informed about the confidentiality of their responses. The attendance record for all the participants was maintained. The participants gave appropriate consent and were observed for medical conditions. They were asked to respond honestly and were told that these assessments should not have any relation with their family matters.

Results

Results were stunning and above all the expectations. In the minds of all participants, consciousness and knowledge increased to a better level. The calmness of mind, positive attitude, respect to other human beings, enjoyment of life, love for nature etc. increased. Peaceful inner mind allowed the divine force to act within us for perfection. Understanding of mother earth transformed their lives to consume food from nature by cultivating them. While doing house hold works, there developed an inner experience of pleasure and concentration, thus resulting in good outcome. They understood that pranayama, meditation, good food, good thoughts etc. leading to good karma is good for our mind and body and also indirectly to the whole world. Their attitude altered, leading to calmness of mind through a self controlled life. After one year of practice, they become energetic and determined personalities. Tension and anxiety were vanished to some extent. Inner biological clock become balanced, and confidence level coupled with faith made to overcome difficulties. In the depth of the soul, they felt an inner calm. Systematic practise of asanas beautifies the body by alterations resulted from coordination between body and mind.

Out of forty participants thirty two have medicated diseases. Cured ones are acidity, anaemia, constipation, indigestion, headaches, obesity, overweight, depression, and anxiety. Sudden angry explosive behaviour was totally cured

among practitioners. Arthritis and rheumatism were controlled to some extent.

Discussion

Selected yoga therapy has got the better result in management of pain in lumbar spondylitis.¹ Postures systematically work in all the major muscle groups, including the back, neck, and shoulders, deep abdominals, hip and buttock muscles and even ankles, feet, wrists and hands.² The aging conditions treated by yoga include cardiovascular disease, stroke, Parkinson's and dementia. Studies on biomarkers are suggestive of underlying mechanisms for yoga effects including increased heart rate variability, increased connectivity based on fMRI data and reduced cortisol and pro-inflammatory.³ Yoga Improves Balance and Low Back Pain, but Not Anxiety, in People with Parkinson's Disease.⁴ Combining Yoga and Ayurveda in all of their forms and in the context of Vedic science results in a complete system of well-being for the body, mind, and awareness that may have no parallel anywhere else in the world.⁵

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