



Yoga for Holistic Health

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ABSTRACT:

Yoga is an ancient remedy to the present modern problems. It is an ancient system of relaxation, exercise, and healing with origins in Indian philosophy. Yoga has gained a popularity around the world during the last century. Yoga, as many people often agree to, is not merely a method to attain mental peace, but also a powerful technique to get rid of ignorance which causes various kinds of suffering in human life. It is a form of mind-body vigour that involves a combination of muscular coordination with an internally directed mindful concentration on awareness of the self, the breath, and energy.

Yoga is not simply Asanas and Pranayamas, it's much more deeper than this. Yoga combines physical postures, rhythmic breathing and meditative exercise to offer the practitioners a unique holistic mind-body experience. It also involves certain moral and ethical practices. These moral practices are known as Yamas and Niyamas. No educational system is effective unless it incorporates into itself these virtuous practices. But those who are temperate in eating and recreation, balanced in work, and regulated in sleep, can mitigate all sorrows by practicing Yoga. As Lord Krishna in Bhagwat Gita says योगोयुक्त आहार विहारस्य, युक्त चेष्टस्य कर्मसु। युक्त स्वप्नाव-बोधस्य, योगो भवति दुःखहा || 6/17. Moreover it is believed that the reason of all the problems of day today life is Ignorance (Avidya) that is considered as the root cause, (Asmita)Ego, (Raga)attachment, (Dvesha)aversion and (Abhinevesha)fear. By connecting and surrendering oneself to Yoga one can control all the affliction.

Introduction

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice and a way of life that includes regulated breathing, maintaining various postures and meditation. The word "yoga" comes from Sanskrit word "Yuj" which means "to yoke" or join. The focus is on the union of mind and body or the harmony of body, breath, and mind. Patanjali formally described the practice of yoga in the treatise of Yoga. He defined yoga as the process of eliminating all thoughts in the mind and allowing it to settle down to silence. Attainment of such an equi-ty, ultimately leads to a balanced and healthy mind and body. Yoga is a systematic process of calming down the mind and Maharshi Patanjali advocated systematic practice which include yama (external ethics), niyama (internal ethics), asanas (postures), pranayama (regulated breathing), pratyahara (detachment), dharna (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (detached awareness of self) aimed toward attainment of self-realisation or the inner blissful state.

Among these, asanas, pranayama and meditation are popular and have been used as a therapy for decades. Health is precocious treasure of an individual who is looking to lead a meaningful life. In the current scenario,

it is quite challenging to enjoy the best productivity for a person through the good physical and mental health. The advancement in science and technology has increased the sedentary and semi-sedentary lifestyle leading to lack of physical activity. In addition to this, stressful situations are also contributing a lot for the rise in psychosomatic diseases. The clinical benefits of practicing yoga include reduced stress and anxiety, improved mood, reduced heart rate, less chronic back pain, and decreased blood pressure.[1]

Ashtanga yoga of sage Patanjali is one of the most comprehensive methodologies for the development of holistic healthcare model-based sustainability for global health, peace and environmental concerns. The research in yoga has shown that its therapeutic values are helpful for health promotion and disease prevention. The principles and practices of Yoga in the form of therapy are being used as preventative, complementary and alternative medicine in dealing with various physical and mental disorders. Social approach, cost-effective and eco-friendly characteristics are the important factors for sustainability of any system and these are effectively achieved in yoga for gaining



numerous health benefits on multiple dimensions of health concepts.

Yoga, is a practice of mental and physical exercise, which aims to acquire a good health in life an individual. Holistic health, integrative treatment and mind, body medicine are some of the current buzz words in health care originated actually from yoga, which took its birth some 5000 years ago in India and is one of the elements of Ayurvedic medicine as the healing science.

Yoga practices are gaining popularity and have the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of health sciences. Having a wide array of practice, all essentially including breathing exercises, physical postures and meditation, the science and art of yoga is reaching new heights. Attainment of such a balance ultimately leads to a balanced and healthy mind and body.[2] Associated with a series of behavioural modifications that contribute to a healthy lifestyle, traditional yoga is a philosophy for living.

The practice improves mood and reduces stress utilising mind/body strategies designed to promote good health that covers relaxation techniques, hypnosis, visualisation, feedback, meditation, autogenic, cognitive behavioural therapy, group therapy and spirituality. Recently, scientists have explored its consistent beneficial biochemical, physiological, psychological effects in human beings.

In modern society, undue emphasis to material gain has resulted into attitudinal, behavioural and personality aberrations.[3]

Yoga based training normalises the functions of the autonomic nervous system by maintaining both sympathetic and parasympathetic indices toward normal.[4]

World Health organisation and other policy makers on Healthcare system are striving a lot to adopt holistic healthcare measures which can be effective in the prevention of lifestyle and psychosomatic diseases such as insomnia , diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension etc

Ashtanga Yoga of Maharishi Patanjali

The classical work of Yoga sutras of Sage Patanjali is one of the most authentic guide on the principles and practices of Yoga which is based on the sankya philosophy. Ethical preparation , control of the mind and body and development of the spiritual journey is explained in the Yoga sutras.

The practice of Ashtanga Yoga is useful in the reduction of the impurities and attainment of the highest wisdom. They are:

- Yama: Universal morality
- Niyama: Personal observances
- Asanas: Body postures
- Pranayama: Regulation of breath
- Pratyahara: Control of the senses
- Dharna: Concentration
- Dhyana: Meditation on the divine
- Samadhi: Union with the divine

Relevance of Yoga in Social Health

The principles of Yoga called as yamas and niyamas are effective in purifying the impurities in moral behaviour which are more serious issues for the social health. Will power, intellect, and stability on the emotions is attained through the practice of these disciplines. It helps to promote social-emotional development in individual life. The social harmony and self-acceptance level improves for the wellness of the society. To be present in the moment by focusing their attention on their breath, as a result, their concentration and focus improves.

Promotion of Physical Health

Yogic intervention are known to affect physical health by improving muscular endurance, muscular strength ,flexibility increasing motor control.The practice of Asanas and pranayama are effectively for improvement of strength and flexibility, enhance the joints range motion and blood circulation. In addition to the beneficial effects on flexibility and relaxation, some yoga postures may achieve the recommended level of intensity for cardiovascular fitness. [5]. Conceivably, *asanas* particularly have a positive effect on fitness and physical flexibility with a secondary effect on the mental state, while the *pranayama* practices and relaxation techniques may result in greater awareness, less stress, and higher well-being and quality of life.

Yoga for Mental Health

The inner conflicts , stressful conditions are known to affect our mental health. The philosophical foundation of yogic principles and practices of Pranayama and meditation harness the mental harmony to develop the peace of mind, serenity which is an antidote in the prevention of mental health issues.Yoga as a complementary and mind body therapy is being practiced increasingly across the world. It is an ancient Indian science that has been used for therapeutic benefit in numerous health care concerns in which mental stress was believed to play a role.[6]

A regular practice of yoga helps an individual to gain inner peace thus improves mental health this mainly due to the meditation and other breathing exercise whereas



physical poses help an individual to attain physical fitness.[7]

Poor mental health conditions, including stress and depression, are known to increase the risk of acute respiratory infections.

Several measures for mental health are described, including pranayama and meditation. Pranayama is known to improve lung function.[8] Yoga boost mood by lowering levels of stress hormones, increasing the production of feel-good chemicals known as endorphins, and bringing more oxygenated blood to your brain. Moreover yoga may have additional benefits. It can affect mood by elevating levels of a brain chemical called gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which is associated with better mood and decreased anxiety.

Regulation of Emotions

Emotional balance is within your reach when you cultivate the intelligence of both your body and mind. An integrative approach to healing anxiety, depression, and chronic stress through yoga and breathing exercises. Anxiety and depression are illnesses which are increasing in incidence worldwide, have a profound effect on an individual's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual capacities, and affect the community as a whole because of reduction persons, ability to perform.[9] This is an important teaching for maintaining stable emotional health. Thus , Yoga is one such psychotherapeutic intervention that has been used in numerous health care concerns where stress was believed to play a role.[10]

Health in Spirituality

Yoga is a essentially spiritual discipline. Spiritual health includes a purposeful life, transcendence and actualisation of different dimensions and capacities of human beings. Spiritual health creates a balance between physical, psychological and social aspects of human life. The sages and saints have walked the great path to fulfil the aim of the meaningful life which is filled with inner harmony and happiness.

Yoga in Diseases

Yoga advocates "Prevention is better than cure" But in case the illness has progressed effective management is possible. Yoga has proved to have a positive impact on dealing with physical and psychological ailments. Yoga practices can thus improve preexisting medical conditions such as arthritis, cancer, mental illness symptoms, and so on. [11]

Yoga is a great way to get rid of diseases and health conditions from cardiac problems to depression. There exists a body of research suggesting that yoga is the best healing therapy for improving spine alignment and joint health. But on the flip side, research also suggests that

yoga can't cure cancers though it can help one deal with chemotherapy. The intent of yoga is to create well-being as a result of physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual balance. This is also the intent of medicine. While the entire focus of yoga is to create such a balance to prevent diseases, yoga can be used to cure or manage diseases as well.

Conclusion

The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word *yuj* meaning "union." An ancient Indian practice, yoga has been classified by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine as a mind-body medicine modality. Yoga is a holistic science and art of living. It can be considered as cost-effective and non-invasive adjuvant therapy. This is because routines Yoga Asanas (poses), Pranayamas (breathing techniques) and Kriyas (cleansing exercises) prescribed in Yoga play a vital role in management of every system in human body. It is seemed that practice of Ashtanga yoga, especially Pranayama, improves the Physical , Mental and Spiritual health of an individual.

As yoga practitioners have always known, intuitively and experientially, yoga doesn't just make you feel good. In particular, the every yogic practice results in reducing the anxiety scores and psychophysiological scores of arousal in patients with anxiety neurosis.

These practices have real, concrete results on the mind and body by leaving a positive impact on its functioning and enhancing its work efficiency. This is not a placebo effect; you don't have to "believe" in yoga for it to work. When you practice regularly over a significant period of time, these changes will occur. Thus, Yoga revives our heritage and tradition and supports the modern health care system to prevent many of the modern psychosomatic diseases.

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