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## A VIEW ON IMPORTANCE OF YOGA AND MEDITATION IN MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

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### ABSTRACT

The need for effective population mental health promotion techniques is crucial, since mental health issues are growing worldwide and existing allopathic treatment regimens are insufficient to get individuals to a level of mental well-being. Mental health is a personal and individual issue. We need to preserve good mental health as humans. However, we establish certain habits and behaviours that might contribute to poor mental health. These behaviours might vary from slight annoyance to severe anxiety and sadness. Mental illness is a wide phrase that encompasses practically all mental disorders produced by erroneous perception, emotion, thinking, and attitude. Such individuals also have difficulty adjusting to others in society. Yoga is gaining popularity across the world as an approachable, acceptable, and cost-effective mind-body activity. People are turning to yoga and meditation for mental health improvement because they are regarded to be more effective than medicine, have less side effects, and do not respond to medication. Yoga has the extra benefit of improving physical fitness and encouraging self-reliance. The evidence supporting yoga and meditation as a method of mental health promotion, sickness prevention, and therapy is discussed in this brief article.

**Key-words** - Mental health, Ayurveda, Pranayam, Asanas, Yoga, Meditation

## INTRODUCTION

Mental well-being is defined as optimal psychological functioning and experience. The absence of psychiatric disease has been often characterized as mental wellness. The mind's effect on health and illness was previously thought to be a crucial component of medicine, but over the last few centuries, mind and medicine have gradually drifted apart. For most of the last century, the focus of psychology on the treatment of psychopathology has eclipsed the promotion of well-being and human progress. However, beginning in the late 1960s with a shift in emphasis toward prevention and continuing to the present, a few scholars have studied growth, well-being, and the promotion of well-beingness. Prevention studies have revealed that by reducing destructive states of mind and increasing constructive states of mind, mental well-being may be improved. Negative emotions, envy, a lack of compassion, and an inability to maintain deep interpersonal relationships are all damaging states of mind. Self-respect, self-esteem, and other positive mental states are examples of constructive mental states.

There are several studies that indicate that different asanas or mediation have a good impact. These papers are generally of the type that list numerous effects assessed during or after meditation. However, reports of an investigative character, i.e., research attempting to clarify the mechanism by which the reported effects may be created, are scarce. Nonetheless, such scientific evidences on health concerns are being

scrutinized by policymakers before treatment plans can be developed. Individual health is defined as a condition of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. As a result, mental health is one component of the broader idea of health. It is concerned with an individual's optimal degree of emotional and behavioural adjustment. It is estimated that 350 million individuals suffer from depression. It was discovered that one out of every twenty persons experienced a bout of depression. The global need for treating depression and other mental health issues is increasing. Mental health is the state of preserving harmony or balance between an individual's needs, wants, goals, and attitudes in relation to the external environment. As a result of these factors, depression is the largest cause of disability globally.

Ayurveda is a psychological as well as a physical method of treatment. Its practice area encompasses both physical (Sharirika) and mental (Manasika) illnesses. Ayu (life) is the mixture of the body, sense organs, intellect, and soul, according to Charaka Samhita.

## Mental Health

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, you're thinking, mood, and behaviour could be affected.

## Mental disorders

A mental illness or mental disease is a psychological or behavioural pattern associated with subjective distress or incapacity that occurs in an individual and is not part of normal growth or culture. A state of cognitive or emotional well-being, or the absence of a mental disorder, can be characterized as mental health. Mental health themes include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, competence, and recognition of one's ability to attain one's intellectual and emotional potential. Individual and personal mental health are issues that must be addressed.

We need to preserve good mental health as humans. However, we establish certain habits and behaviours that might contribute to poor mental health. These behaviours might vary from slight annoyance to severe anxiety and sadness. Mental illness is a broad term that includes almost all mental diseases produced by incorrect perception, emotion, thinking, and attitude. Such persons have trouble adapting to their social circumstances. Mental disorders add considerably to the global disease burden and affect people in all communities worldwide.

Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry, life experiences, such as trauma or abuse; family history of mental health problems.

## Causes of Mental Illness

- **Genetics (heredity):** Because mental diseases may run in families, persons who have a family member with one may be more prone to acquire one themselves. Susceptibility is handed down via

generations via genes. The combination of numerous genes and other variables (stress, abuse, or traumatic events) that might impact or initiate a disease in a person who has a hereditary sensitivity to it causes mental illness.

- **Infections:** Certain infections have been associated to brain damage and the development or aggravation of mental disease symptoms.
- **Brain damage:** Some mental diseases have been connected to abnormalities in or injury to specific parts of the brain.
- **Prenatal damage:** Some evidence suggests that a disruption of early fetal brain development or trauma that occurs at the time of birth -- for example, loss of oxygen to the brain -- may be a factor in the development of certain conditions, such as autism.
- **Substance abuse:** Long-term substance abuse, in particular, has been linked to anxiety, depression, and paranoia.
- **Psychological factors** that may contribute to mental illness include severe psychological trauma suffered as a child, such as emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, death or divorce, a dysfunctional family life, feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, anger, or loneliness, changing jobs or schools, social or cultural expectations, etc.

## Signs for Mental Illness

Eating or sleeping excessively or insufficiently; withdrawing from others and routine tasks; having little or no energy; smoking, drinking, or taking drugs; feeling abnormally confused, forgetful, furious, agitated, concerned, or terrified, screaming or fighting, and so on.

## Meditation

Meditation is achieved when the mind is trained to focus on an external or internal object for long enough to eliminate all distractions, and when the stream of thought proceeds in a single path without interruption towards a certain subject. During meditation, significant and possibly beneficial changes occur in basic biological processes. During meditation, oxygen intake reduces, heart rate slows, and an alpha brain wave increase. In other words, there are various indications of relaxation and decreased stress. Meditation has assisted many people in overcoming drug or alcohol addiction. Meditation causes a shift toward self-observation, which may be effective for encouraging behavioural adjustments. Meditation entails self-observation and desensitization to thoughts, concerns, and worries, in addition to relaxation and redirecting of attention. Meditation can improve behavioural self-control by training one to relax and clear the mind of ideas and pictures, as well as boosting attention to stress circumstances.

### **Yoga for mental health problems**

#### ❖ **Yoga for depression**

According to the Patanjali yoga sutras, chanting and meditating on the sound "Om" can be a beneficial technique for calming the mind. The vibratory component of the humming sound "mmm" at the conclusion of "Om" chanting may have comparable effects as stimulation of the vagus nerve's auricular branch (which is a known treatment modality for depression). Thus, reciting the sound "Om" aloud may be a beneficial exercise for depression. Other hatha yoga books state that practicing bellows breath (bhastrika) for three sets of

20 strokes each has revitalizing benefits and avoids ailments. The yogic postures which focus on backbends and chest opening e.g., tree pose (vrikshasana), half wheel pose (ardha chakrasana), half-camel pose (ardha ustrasana), fish pose (matsyasana), warrior pose (veerbhadrasana) etc., may thus be useful. The practice should be modified dynamically, with short times of rest in between. In the beginning, it is preferable to concentrate on physical postures, rapid breathing methods, and loud mantra chanting. As the patient's yoga practice progresses, the postures can be held for longer periods of time, and slower breathing techniques can be employed. It is recommended to avoid extremely introspective meditation techniques that emphasize sensory detachment, at least in the early stages of therapy.

#### ❖ **Yoga for Anxiety**

Anxiety patients exhibit indications of sympathetic overactivity; hence, yoga should focus on bringing about a state of profound relaxation. According to yoga philosophy, there are five layers of consciousness (physical layer, energy layer, emotional layer, intellectual layer, and bliss layer) that can be used to explain how yoga connects and harmonizes different layers using yoga techniques, and how it uses physical postures to bring relaxation at the body level, breathing techniques to slow down and regularise the breath, and meditation to calm the mind. In contrast to the techniques recommended for depression, treatments for anxiety should be mild, slow and rhythmic.

Difficult and dangerous postures, rapid breathing routines, and loud chanting

can all cause anxiety. The postures should be pleasant and stable. Forward bending and gravity-based movements are regarded more soothing in yogic literature, therefore postures such as moon position (shashankasana), wind releasing stance (pavanmuktasana), hand to feet pose (padhastasana), and crocodile pose (makrasana) may be more beneficial. Meditative methods with more open monitoring than concentrated attention might be effective here, as can mild, soothing mantras such as "Om" or simple, gently humming "mmm."

#### ❖ Yoga for Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders

Patients with psychotic illnesses lose touch with reality. Though patients on drugs may be taught yoga techniques with ease, individuals in the early stages of sickness and experiencing acute exacerbations of psychotic episodes require additional understanding and care from the therapist. Patients should always be urged to take their drugs on a regular basis. Yoga therapy can only be done in conjunction with pharmaceuticals and will mostly assist with the negative symptoms of psychotic diseases such as lack of desire, lack of socializing, emotional withdrawal, and so on. Caregivers have an important role in psychotic diseases. Jogging, twisting, forward-backward bending, followed by eight rounds of suryanamaskar (sun salutations) (first four rounds fast; next four rounds slow) and then brief relaxation in shavasana with abdominal breathing; then ardha-ustrasana, vakrasana, bhujangasana, dhanurasana and sarvangasana, matsyasana. This is followed by two sets of quick breathing

(bhasrika 20 counts) and calm breathing (alternate nostril breathing). Antipsychotic medications can cause stiffness, tremors, weight gain, and insulin resistance; thus, suryanamaskar (sun salutations) and fast breathing practices (e.g., bhasrika or bellows breath) can help reduce weight, while right nostril breathing can improve metabolic rate and cognitive functions.

#### **Asanas for Mental health**

Hatha Yoga describes Shatkarmas (six processes) in details for body purification and mind purification. Various asanas (Yoga Positions), six shatkarmas, mudras and bandhas (psychic knots or psycho-physiological energy release techniques) and Pranayama are described in texts of Hatha Yoga. They work at the chitta (subtle aspect of consciousness) level that eliminates the physical and mental tensions. They are trained insupine and prone position of the body respectively. Shavasana and Vijrasana, Bhujangasana, Trikonasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana etc. are important relaxative asanas.

#### **Importance of Yoga**

Yoga is not a religion; it is a way of life aimed at achieving a healthy mind in a healthy body. Man is a physical, mental, and spiritual creature, and yoga promotes the development of all three. Other types of physical exercise, such as aerobics, merely provide bodily well-being. They have little to do with the spiritual or astral body's growth. Yoga activities provide cosmic energy and capabilities to the body such as

- Attainment of complete equilibrium and harmony
- Promotes self-healing
- Removes negative barriers from the mind and toxins from the body

- Increases personal power
- Increases self awareness
- Aids in attention, focus, and concentration, which is especially crucial for children

### Conclusion

Various mental disorders had emerged from life, becoming a financial and social burden on one's life. A regimen for almost everything is outlined in fully or simply in Ayurvedic texts. One of the fundamental concepts of Ayurveda is the mental element. Various causes, characteristics, and therapies are discussed in Samhita, particularly under the heading "Unamada." Yoga appears to hold promise for improving population mental health. It is acceptable, accessible, cost-effective, and promotes self-sufficiency. Yoga is a health-promoting individual activity that may be done in groups and is supported by communities. Yoga practice in workplaces, schools, and other group settings has been found to improve population mental health. Deep calm breathing, along with movement and other parts of yoga, appears to be at the basis of yoga's potential to offer individuals a deeper sense of tranquillity. Asanas, in particular, improve fitness and physical flexibility, with a secondary influence on mental state, whilst pranayama practices and relaxation/meditation methods may result in more awareness, less stress, and improved well-being and quality of life.

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