



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. IX, Issue No. XVIII,
April-2015, ISSN 2230-7540*

**THE EFFECT OF PRANAYAMA MEDITATION
AND YOGIC PRACTICE ON HIGH BLOOD
PRESSURE AND DIABETES**

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

The Effect of Pranayama Meditation and Yogic Practice on High Blood Pressure and Diabetes

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Abstract – The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of Yoga exercises- Asanas and Pranayama on diabetic person. Yoga Asanas and Pranayama were conducted on respondents before starting the Asanas and Pranayama blood pressure, blood sugar, and hemoglobin were measured. After it was observed that Asanas and Pranayama have reduced adults 'blood sugar level, blood pressure and hemoglobin. These changes were observed due to Yoga exercises and it was found at normal level. These observations suggested that Yoga Asanas and Pranayama have a beneficial effect on controlling diabetic symptoms. It was assumed that there would be significant effect of Yoga- Asanas and pranayama on blood pressure, blood glucose and hemoglobin. The results of the study reveal that there is significant reduction in post-test condition. Yogic exercises showed a positive and significant impact on diabetic adults.

Keywords: Pranayama, Meditation, Yogic, Practice, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Adults, Impact, Asanas, Yoga, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Yoga is a systematic practice for the realization of higher perceptions. It is the science of life and an ideal way of living, providing rhythm to the body, melody to the mind, harmony to the soul and thereby symphony to life. In short, Yoga is a way to achieve total health, peace, bliss and wisdom. Physical, mental and spiritual aspects of yoga help to make one's life purposeful, useful and noble. Thus Yoga is an art, science and philosophy, which influence the life of man at each level. Therefore, the effect of yoga must be felt in every movement of our day- to- day lives. India has more diabetics than any other country in the world, according to the International Diabetes Foundation (2010), although more recent data suggest that China has even more (BBC news, 2010). The disease affects more than 50 million Indians - 7.1% of the nation's adults - and kills about 1 million Indians a year (Kleinfeld, 2006). The average age at the onset is 42.5 years. The high incidence is attributed to a combination of genetic susceptibility plus adoption of a high-calorie, low-activity lifestyle by India's growing middle class (Kleinfeld, 2006). The word yoga means 'union': union of mind, body and spirit - the union between us and the intelligent cosmic spirit of creation- 'the oneness of all things'. Recent scientific studies have shown the beneficial role of yogic exercises in management of asthma. Role of yogic exercises in management of cardiac diseases (Jayosinghe, 2004), diabetes, chronic pancreatitis (Sareen & kumah, 2006), depressive disorders (Sharma et. All, 2005),

epilepsy (Rajesh et. All, 2006), osteoarthritis (Ernst, 2006), multiple sclerosis (Pozzilli et. all, 2006), even for tuberculosis (Visweswaraiiah & Telles, 2004) and pleural effusion (Prakasamma & Bhaduri, 1984) have been reported the five principles of yoga are relaxation, exercise (Asanas), pranayama (breathing control), nourishing diet, and positive thinking and meditation, Pranayama are yogic breathing techniques that increase the capacity of lungs. (Yadav & Das, 2001; Frostell, 1983) help to strengthen the internal organs improve mental control and deepen your ability to relax (Granath, 2006).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The ancient Indian science yoga is a way of life which includes changes in mental attitude, diet, and the practice of specific techniques such as yoga postures (Asanas), breathing practices (pranayama), and meditation. Among different yoga techniques, breathing practices (pranayama) can be performed while seated, and are less challenging for people who are physically inactive (Ramdev, 2005). Yoga has proven its efficacy in the improvement of oxidative stress as well as in improving the glycemic status of diabetics through neuroendocrine mechanisms.

1. Pranayama:

Pranayama means control of life force through the art of breathing. Pranayama means breath control. In Sanskrit, prana means breath and Ayama means a

control. In modern literature on yoga, prana, even in the compound pranayama, has been often interpreted to mean a subtle psyche force or a subtle cosmic element. Prana means a subtle life force which provides energy to different organs (including mind) and also controls many vital life processes (e.g. circulation, respiration etcetera). Ayama signifies the voluntary effort to control and direct this prana.

2. Yoga-Asanas:

Asana is derived from the verb root —as which means —to sit, —to remain, etc., According to Patanjali; Asana is defined as, —SITHRAM SUKHAM ASANAM-PYS 11:46 meaning, that position which is comfortable and steady. Therefore asana means, a state of being in which one can remain physically and mentally steady, calm, quiet and comfortable. Asanas are postures, which contribute to stability and sense of well-being. The stability here refers not merely of the posture but of the mind and the body as a whole. There were originally 84, 00,000 Asanas representing 84, 00,000 incarnations. Asanas help in rejuvenating the pancreatic cells, thereby assisting insulin secretion. The muscular movements also help in bringing down the blood sugar levels by increasing the glucose utilization. Asanas induce relaxation, which also plays a key role in the healthy functioning of the internal organs of the body.

3. The Aim of Yoga:

The aim of yoga is to attain perfection of the intellect, both of the head and the heart, so that, the artist becomes devoted, true and pure. This demands an almost total relinquishment of interest in other activities of life except the chosen path. The mind is fluid and runs after sensual pleasures. Art demands total undivided focal attention. Hence Patanjali explains that the mind must be controlled and then submitted to serve the artistic nature of yoga to its highest potency. Yoga or any art requires acute sharpness of intellect and alert organs of perception. In yoga there is no competition but it requires freedom to think and reconstruct with a desire to perform better. Then it brings to the yogi the most exalted enlightenment. From now on, wherever the yogi is and whatever he does, his thoughts are rooted in spiritual communion, which takes him to the Zenith of spiritual life. The Indian classical thought holds salvation as the ultimate objective of human endeavor. This ideal of achieving salvation (moksha) can be attained by the four different ways viz. Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga and Gyana yoga etc. We shall in the time allotted briefly consider 'Raja yoga' or 'Astanga yoga' as propounded by Maharishi Patanjali and Swami Vivekananda.

4. Meaning and Concept of Yoga:

The word "Yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit root "Yuj" which means union, joining, harnessing, contact, or connection it is union between the individual self and

the universal self. It is the fusion of a healthy body with a disciplined mind for the purpose of spiritual development. Yoga is also blissful contact with the supreme element, higher than the highest of the known elements. It is the harnessing of one's inherent inner power, as well as the wider natural forces from which one has emerged. Yoga is an inseparable part of the Indian life and culture. It has come down to us from antiquity with an unbroken tradition. Integration encompasses putting together and controlling the same judiciously. This is consistent with the definition of Yoga in "Bhagavad Gita" which says, "Smatvameva Yoga Uchyate" that is equanimity is called Yoga. It means that yoga remains equipoised in success and failure, gain and loss, victory and defect etc. The term 'Samatva' may also be translated as equilibrium, which leads to harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of human personality. Equanimity and equilibrium are thus the essential traits of Yoga. They help in the skillful performance of an action.

5. Yoga as an Art:

Yoga is an art in all its aspects, from the most practical to the highest. It is a spiritual art, in the sense that it transforms the seer and brings him into contact with his inner soul. It is a fine art, since it is aesthetic, expressive, visual art, since the body is made to form geometrical designs, lines architectural shapes and the like which are beautiful to behold. It is essentially a useful art for the doer and is presented as a performing art for viewer. The art of yoga is creative, rhythmic in practice and individualistic in nature. It is ennobling. It is the purest of knowledge where wisdom begins and investigates into the nature as being as love is experienced by the lover and the beloved. As living is an art, yogic enhances the quality of one's life. Hence it is an art. It improves one's thought process and enables one to face life's difficult situations happily and with equanimity. It teaches one to strive to achieve a goal in life, to cultivate friendliness, concentration, piety, contentment, joy and more essentially to discard what is not essential to life and to cultivate good habits to lead a righteous life. Yoga is disciplined action to achieve and attain final emancipation.

6. Yoga as a Science:

Yoga is considered as a full-fledged science. The science of yoga consists of acquiring knowledge through observation and experiment. It is a science, which deals with the body and mind controlling the body through the practice of Yoga to achieve the rhythm of mind. The health and strength of the body and the mind are acquired, only when a state of equilibrium is attained whereby the body and the mind are balanced. Like all other arts, Yoga is also a science as well as a philosophy too. As science is concerned with analyses Yoga too is bent on analysis. Yoga analyses the turbulent mind and shows the ways and means of reaching the ultimate goal of freedom. As any other science, yoga too conveys truth. On a

practical level, yoga keeps the body healthy the mind quiet and pure, and self in beatitude. It is therefore a darsana. The practical aspect of yoga darsana conveys the artistic aspect of Yoga with its precision and beauty. The science of yoga works on physical, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual aspects of a person, when imbalance is experienced at this level, the organs, muscles and nerves no longer function in harmony, rather they act in opposition to one another. Therefore, yoga aims at bringing the different bodily functions into perfect co-ordination so that they work for the good at the whole body. Therefore yoga develops the personality of an individual mentally, morally, spiritually and intellectually.

CONCLUSION:

It was assumed that there would be significant effect of Yoga- Asanas and pranayama on blood pressure, blood glucose and hemoglobin. As a result of one month of Pranayama and Asanas practice when compared to post-test condition. The results of the study reveal that there is significant reduction in post-test condition. Yogic exercises showed a positive and significant impact on diabetic adults. In the case of systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure it was found that the reduction level was significant in post-test condition. Similar study is necessary to observe the efficacy Asanas and Pranayama on different age level and gender. Another suggestion may also be that these variables should be included with other variables and different time intervals with an organized manner. From the statistical analysis of the results obtained in the present study and their comparison with other published reports, it may be concluded that yoga helps in decreasing blood sugar level and keep the diabetes in control.

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