

CHAPTER

93

Clinical Application of Meditation

H. L. Dhar

Introduction

Concept of meditation is as old as civilization. Saints and seers had taken refuge in solitude and meditation to get peace of mind. Values of meditation are beyond doubt¹ but therapeutic approach is quite recent.²

The word meditation was coined from Greek word Meridi (heal). It was practiced in ancient Greece for thousands of years followed by India and first documented in the Book of Wisdom, the veda 4000 years ago.³

Medicine is one of the oldest discipline that was evolved out of human need, out of sympathy between man and man to help each other in their sorrows and sufferings. Thus meditation is the oldest known therapy although scientific evidence is quite recent. Attempt has been made to present age-old meditation in a new perspective with modern touch.

Divine healing

With the dawn of civilization came the concept of God and Divine healing as a solace to mankind and meditation became a handy approach for mental uplift and for relief of pain and suffering. Divine healing is a God related discipline and became popular after Jesus Christ with his miracle healing. Very recently divine healing has been used in Uganda as antiviral (AIDS) therapy.⁴

Spiritual Healing

It was originated with Buddha (500 B.C.) as a great relief of human suffering. Buddha used to cure people instantaneously by raising his hand, however, Buddha was conscious about his limitations and created four Tantras, which he used to teach himself, and latter became Tibetan Medicine studied by all Tibetan physicians.

Spiritual Medicine

500 years hence Jesus Christ, the great healer used to cure people either individually or in groups with blessings and spiritual healing became a spiritual discipline. Scientific evidence shows that spiritual healing brings about the easing of symptoms, the removal of blocks in energetic flows, the retrieval of repressed memories of emotional hurts, improvements in many illnesses, improvements in relationships and an opening into spiritual awareness. All of these may be achieved with no more than the laying on of hands or the projection of healing from a distance. In recent years, interest has been created amongst chronically sick individuals in spiritual healing either through receiving blessings from highly spiritual person and/or through practice of meditation.⁵ It has been reported that participation in spiritual and psychological therapies may be related to beneficial clinical outcome in HIV positive individuals including improved survival.⁶

However, first rational approach to healing came from Holistic Medicine of Socrates 4th century AD. Socrates warned that treating one part of the body only would not have good result. This has got its reflection on modern medicine particularly Geriatric medicine, where a physician treats his patient as a whole individual comprising of all aspects of his ailments and also looks to his economic and social background before starting treatment. The term holistic stresses, the spiritual and emotional health contributes just as much as physical and mental health to overall state of being well.⁷

Mind and Body Medicine

In recent decades mind/body medicine has been an important field in healthcare where physicians consider that the process of mind has a major impact in influencing the health of the body. Among various types of mind /body medicine therapy, meditation remains one of the most practiced technique and many scientific studies carried out have proven the positive effects of meditation on both mental and physical health.⁸

Recent studies are showing that meditation can result in stable brain patterns and changes over both short and long term intervals that have not been seen before in human beings suggesting the potential for the systematic driving of positive neuro - plastic changes via such intentional practices cultivated over time. These investigations may offer opportunities for understanding the basic unifying mechanisms of the brain, mind and body that underlie awareness and our capacity for effective adaptation to stressful and uncertain conditions.⁹

Human suffering consists of diseases of body and mind put together. There are increasing evidence that more and more diseases are genetically linked particularly non-communicable diseases. It is here that science and spirituality meet.¹⁰ Genes get mutated according to good or bad work but due to shortage of life span it may not be able to manifest and passes to next life. Genetic predisposition is nothing but outcome of our work reflected in spirituality.

If we want to remain disease free, we can guard our own gene through meditation with spiritual uplift.

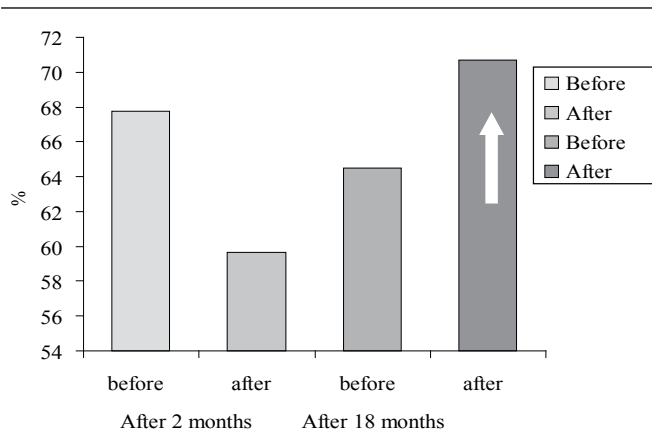
Ayurveda is a mind body medicine with spiritual background. Ancient physicians were also sages who believed human body is created out of consciousness and Ayurveda says the same. Ayurveda does not consider human body as collection of cells, tissues or organs but in terms of Quantum perspective. Quantum is invisible energy million times smaller than atom, which forms the basis of everything that exists. Quantum healing based on Ayurveda suggests that there are three powerful techniques which can cure any disease e.g. Meditation, Bliss and Primordial sound which cures different disease process like cancer.¹¹ Very recently Ayurvedic principle has been applied to treat elephantiasis.¹²

Yoga

However, initial therapeutics effect of meditation came from yoga, which ends in meditation. In clinical yoga, meditation serves as mirror image leading to therapeutic meditation. Many substances like cannabines were used for religious or meditative purpose. North American Indians used particularly psychoactive plants containing hallucinogenic substances in order to drive in connection with a dance or similar ritual, into a trance like condition leading to hysterical convulsion followed by calm and relaxation considered to be treatment of CNS disorders particularly epilepsy. **Integrated yoga** of which meditation is a major component has been known for decades as a remedy for various psychosomatic disorders.¹³

In recent years, yoga has been used to treat breast cancer. It has been demonstrated that yoga is associated with beneficial effects on social functioning among a medically diverse sample of breast cancer survivor's.¹⁴ Recently, **Iyengar yoga** has been used in osteoarthritis of knee with considerable success.¹⁵ However, Kundalini yoga meditation has been found to be specific for treating obsessive compulsive disorders (OCD),

Figure 1 : Effect of Saral Meditation on Academic Performance



Short term (for 2 months) practice of Saral Meditation does not produce any change in terms of Academic Performance. But it is improved after the practice of meditation for 18 months. ($p < 0.001$)

fourth common disabling disorder world wide.¹⁶ **Yogasana** has also been shown to increase GABA and improve depression and anxiety.¹⁷ Still recently, Raja yoga has claimed to reduce blood cholesterol and **Sahaja Yoga** a simplified version of Raja Yoga has been reported to reduce frequency of epileptic fits and symptoms of asthma.¹³

Vipassana meditation of Buddha (500 BC) has recently been demonstrated as a powerful anti-stress, reducing blood cortisol level and practice amongst street children has been claimed to reduce incidence of crime.¹³ Very recently **vipassana** meditation has been found to be effective in post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).¹⁸

Clinical meditation (CM) is a new psychological discipline developed by Transcultural society for clinical Meditation (TSCM), and has claimed to be curative of various psychosomatic disorders, however it requires different techniques.¹⁹

Medical Meditation of Dharam Singh Khalsa recently, has shown to reduce many illnesses but requiring different techniques for different disorders particularly those associated with aging.²⁰ It has claimed to be best antiaging medicine directly rejuvenating the hypothalamus, pituitary, pineal and other endocrine glands however, requiring

different techniques for different glands. Recently, meditation has been reported to be true antiaging medicine because it activates our body's own natural antiaging healing force.²¹

Transcendental Meditation (TM)

However, no one can talk on meditation without referring to TM of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It is the first meditation that came out with comprehensive scientific evidence of wide-ranging beneficial effects.¹³

Initially, TM has demonstrated to reduce tension and increase intelligence and performance and that long-term practice reverses the aging process. Subsequently it was shown to be preventive as well as curative in a wide variety of illnesses: CNS, CVS, Endocrine, Respiratory, Metabolic, Immune system and Inter body system (cancer) and found to be effective in hypertension and wide variety of cardiovascular diseases.²² Unlike medical meditation, which requires specific technique for different endocrine glands, TM is unique in pursuing a simple technique having effect on various endocrine glands for balanced secretion.

Saral Meditation

Saral Meditation is a simplified version of Transcendental Meditation but without Mantra given on a mass scale with universal acceptance.²³⁻²⁵ It has been reported that practice of Saral meditation for one and half years significantly increases intelligence, performance and reduces tension, incidence of disease and aging process. In the elderly, practice of Saral meditation has been demonstrated to reduce sleeplessness and convert loneliness to solitude.²⁶ It has been shown that practice of Saral meditation for 3 years reduces chronological age by 6 years comparable with TM (Fig 1). Short-term practice of 6 months has been shown to increase mental alertness in terms of reaction time.²³ Present study shows that short term practice although increases academic performance, significant rise occurs after practice for one and half years (Fig. 2).

Preliminary studies also showed that practice of Saral meditation for more than 6 months increases alfa activity in EEG.²³ Present study confirms that practice of Saral meditation for more than one year showed considerable increase in alfa activity compared to control (Fig 3). Normally 95% of

world population functions in beta range for normal activities.¹³

Quantum Meditation: A revolutionary meditation introduced recently^{11,27,28} claimed to reverse incurable diseases like cancer and prevent fetal abnormality if mother practices before conception and through out pregnancy. Quantum is invisible energy, million times smaller than an atom. Meditation works at molecular level bringing out inner qualities but quantum meditation acts far beyond at conscious level, untouched by disease.

Figure 2 : Saral Meditation - Reversal of aging process(Comparison of TM and Saral Meditation)

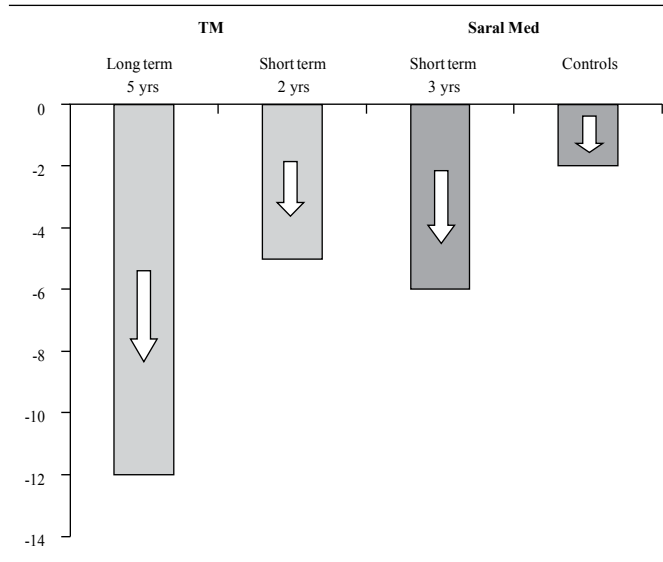
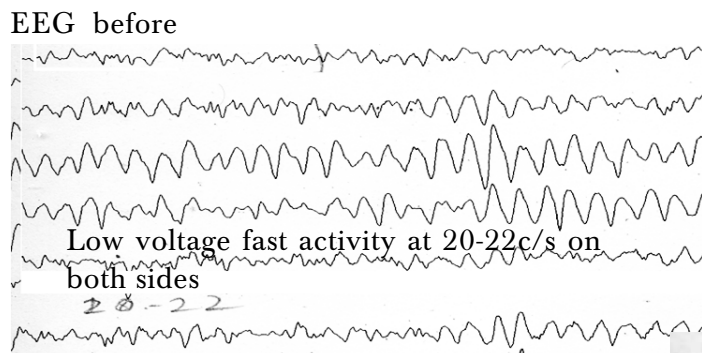


Figure 3 : Effect of Saral Meditation



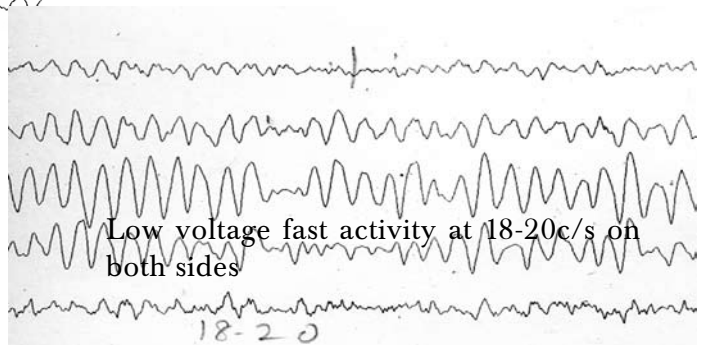
β
 α

Activity at 9 c/s on posterior region.

EEG after one year

β
 α

Activity at 8-c/s on posterior region.



But initial therapeutic effect of meditation came from yoga. This was followed by other

types of meditations e.g. Vipassana meditation, Clinical meditation, Medical meditation etc. but Transcendental Meditation (TM) was the first which came out with comprehensive evidence of wide ranging therapeutic effects as preventive as well as curative against wide variety of illnesses in addition to its powerful antiaging effect. Saral meditation, a simplified version of TM but without Mantra, over the years has been shown to have similar effects.

Meditation works at molecular level bringing out inner qualities but recently, Quantum meditation has claimed to act at conscious level curing incurable diseases like cancer and preventing fetal abnormality through mother.

References

- Dhar HL. Values of Meditation *Bhavans Journal* 2006; 53(8): 69-70.
- Dhar HL. Meditation as Medicine *BHJ* 2007 (Press).
- Dhar HL. Science and spirituality *BHJ* 2006; 48 (2): 325 – 325.
- Wanyama, Jene a Castoinurovo et al. Belief in divine healing can be a barrier to anti viral therapy adherence in Uganda. *AIDS* 2007,21 (11) ; 1482 – 1492.
- Dhar HL. Meditation for the young, old and for the sick. *Ind J Clin Pract.* 2006 11(10): 25-27 & 35.
- Fitzpatrick AL, Standish LJ, Berger J et al. Survival in HIV – 1 positive adults practicing psychological or spiritual activities for one year *Alter Ther Health Med* 2007, 5: 18-20.
- Dhar HL. Holistic and spiritual approach to health care: *Bhavan's Journal* 2007 (Press).
- Barrows KA, Jacobes BP. Mind body medicine. *Med Clin North Am* 2002;86:11-35.
- Seminar on investigating mind. The science and clinical applications of Meditation. DAR Constitution Hall. Washington DC Nov. 8-10, 2005.
- Kashinath Padhiary. Medicine and Spirituality. *Medicine Update* 2004; 14:685 – 688.
- Dhar H L . Quantum Meditation in Reversal of aging and disease process. *BHJ* 2006; 48(2) : 326 – 329.
- Narahari SR, Ryan TJ , Mahadevan PE et al. Integrated management of filarial lymphoma for rural communities. *Lymphology* 2007, 40 (1) ; 3 –13.
- Dhar H L . Clinical Application of Meditation. Current Issues in Geriatrics P S Shankar ed, Geriatric Society of India, New Delhi. 2007:22-29.
- Moadel A B , Shah C , Wylie – Rosett J et al. Randomized controlled trial of yoga among a multiethnics sample of breast cancer patients. *J Clin Oncol.* Oct.2007; 25(28) ; 4387 – 4395.
- Bakowski EL, Caonway A, Glentz LA et al. The effect of Iyengar Yoga and strengthening exercise for people living with osteoarthritis of knee. *Int Q community Health edu* 2007 Mar 126(3): 287-305.
- David S Shannahoff-Khalsa. An introduction to Kundalini yoga meditation technique that are specific for treatment of psychic disorders. *The J Alt Comp Med* 2004;10(1):1-11.
- Streeter CC, Jensen JE, Perlmutter RM is et al. Yoga Asana sessions increase GABA levels: A pilot study. *J Altern Complement Med* 2007 May 13(4): 419-426.
- Simpson TL, Kaysen D, Bowen S et al. PTSD symptoms, substance use and Vipassana meditation among incarcerated individuals. *J Trauma stress* 2007,3: 239-249.
- Transcultural Society for clinical meditation. Transcultural meditation studies. A new discipline constructivism in *human science* 2004; 6: 95-112.
- Arias AJ, Steinberg K, Banga A et al. Systemic reviews of the efficacy of meditation techniques as treatment for medical illness. *Alter Comp Med* 2006; 12(8): 817-832.
- Dhar HL . Recent advances on antiaging *J Gerontol* 2007; 21(1): 87-90.
- Barnes Vermon A, Orme-Johnson, David M. Clinical and pre-clinical applications of Transcendental meditation program in preventing and treatment of essential hypertension and cardiovascular disease in youth and adults. *Hypertension* 2006; 2(3): 207-218.
- Dhar HL. Scientific approach to Meditation. *Current Med Trends.* 2006; 10: 1930-1938.
- Dhar HL. Current concepts of Meditation *BHJ* 2006; 48(4): 623-625.
- Dhar HL. Saral Meditation-Scientific evidences – special reference to Quantum Meditation. *Ind J Clin Pract.* 2007 (Press).
- Dhar HL. Mechanism of Saral Meditation without mantra that improves all round quality of life. *BHJ* 2004; 46(3): 291-294.
- Dhar HL. Current concept of Quantum Meditation. *Bhavans Journal* 2007 (Press).
- Dhar HL. Meditation – A balancing act. *Current Med Trends* 2007 (Press).