

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF MEDITATION ON STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN AND MEN

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ABSTRACT

Meditation helps an individual overcome these emotions to facilitate a calm peaceful mind and healthy and stress free body. Meditation promotes relaxation, develops self-concept, self-confidence, positive attitude and social ability and reduces stress as well as anxiety. Purpose: The purpose of the present study intended to find out the effects of meditation on stress among working women and men. The investigators have also made an attempt to assess the superiority among the experimental groups. Methodology: Total sixty working women (N=60) and sixty working men of District Howrah, West Bengal State were selected at randomly as subjects for the present study. The age limit of the subjects was 40-50 years. All the subjects of working women were divided into two equal groups such as Gr. WE and Gr. WC. On the Other hand, all the subjects of working men were divided in to two groups such as ME and MC. Group. WE and ME were experimental groups and Gr. WC and MC served as control group. Stress Questionnaire designed by The International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK) and it was employed to all the subjects of Gr. WE, Gr. ME, Gr. WC and MC and thereafter specific meditation as a treatment was given to Gr. WE and Gr. ME for five days in a week and continued six months and finally the subjects were retested on criterion measures. The data were analyzed by paired t-test to find out the effects of the treatment. Results: The results of the present study showed that the stress was reduced significantly at .05 level of confidence among both meditation practitioners groups after six months treatment. But no significant differences observed among Gr. WE and Gr. ME after six months treatment. Conclusion: Meditation practitioners groups such as Gr. WE and ME were reduced stress significantly after six months treatment but no significant difference observed among experimental groups.

Key words : Meditation, Yoga, Stress.

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INTRODUCTION

The English word 'meditation' is derived from the Latin word 'meditatio' which means "to think, contemplate, devise, ponder, and meditate. The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation. In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. Meditation is universal. It transcends all divides like religion, country and culture. It is a gift given to mankind to access the infinite spirit not limited by any identity. It is the only tool that can aid a person to return to innocence. In modern life style has high exposure to anger, hate, fear and other negative emotion. Meditation helps an individual overcome these emotions to facilitate a calm peaceful mind and healthy and stress free body. Meditation promotes relaxation, develops self-concept, self-confidence, positive attitude and social ability and reduces stress as well as anxiety.

Most of us can manage varying amounts of pressure without feeling stressed. However too much or excessive pressure, often created by our own thinking patterns and life experiences, can overstretch our ability to cope

and then stress is experienced. Singh M. P et. al.(2009) studied on socialability between IIT Gandhinagar engineering students and VGEC Ahmedabad engineering students and results showed that the both institutes confronts to the same level of academic stress which requires almost similar level of attention towards the academics. Jadhav (2006) investigated the impact of yoga practices on self-concept among fifty naturopathy and yogic science college students and fifty MBBS students both male and female. Result revealed that naturopathy and yogic science college students have better self-concept than MBBS students. Deshpande, Nagendra and Raghuram (2009) studied the practice of integrated yoga module consisted of asanas, pranayama, meditation, notional correction and devotional session on personality and self-esteem in normal adult, compared with the mild moderate physical exercise group.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study intended to find out the effects of meditation on stress among working women and men.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE: Total one hundred twenty subjects such as sixty working women (N=60) and sixty working men (M=60) of District Howrah, West Bengal State were selected at randomly as subjects for the present study. The age limit of the subjects was 40-50 years. All the subjects of working women were divided into two equal groups such as Gr. WE (n=30) and Gr. WC (n=30). Gr. WE was experimental group and Gr. WC served as control group. On the other hand, all the subjects of working men were divided into two equal groups such as Gr. ME (n=30) and MC (n=30). Gr. ME was experimental group and Gr. MC served as control group.

TOOLS: Stress Questionnaire designed by The International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK) and it was employed to all the subjects of Gr. WE, Gr. ME, Gr. WC and Gr. MC and thereafter specific meditation as a treatment was given to Gr. WE and Gr. ME for five days in a week and continued six months and finally the subjects were retested on criterion measures. The data were analysed by paired t-test to find out the effects of the treatment. Total twenty-five statements are there and answer all the questions with either a **Yes** or a **No**. Answer yes, even if only part of a question applies to you. The subjects were given 30 minutes for answer and they completed their answer honestly.

SCORES: One or zero score for each answer.

- i) 4 points or less:** You are least likely to suffer from stress-related illness.
- ii) 5 - 13 points:** You are more likely to experience stress related ill health either mental, physical or both. You would benefit from stress management / counselling or advice to help in the identified areas.
- iii) 14 points or more:** You are the most prone to stress showing a great many traits or characteristics that are creating un-healthy behaviours. This means that you are also more likely to experience stress & stress-related illness e.g. diabetes, irritable bowel, migraine, back and neck pain, high blood pressure, heart disease/strokes, mental ill health (depression, anxiety & stress). It is important to seek professional help or stress management counselling. Consult your medical practitioner.

TREATMENT CONSISTS OF FOLLOWING MEDITATION:

Prayer is the best to begin all session of meditation. It helps to concentrate our mind, so investigator used to start all the session of meditation with prayer. Then girls of Gr. M practised slow breathing exercise for three minutes. After breathing exercise they practised following meditation treatment:

- Phase-1: 1st Month meditated with the word of mantra (Guru Mantra) played by audio system and sited in sukhasana.
- Phase-2: 2nd and 3rd Month meditated with a slow imaginary speech by the investigator and sited in ardha padmasana.
- Phase-3: 4th and 5th month meditated with imaginary speech along with slow audio music and sited in padmasana.
- Phase-4: 6th month meditated with full of silence sited in padmasana, they Concentrated deeply towards the point between their eyebrows. Keep their mind focused and energy internalized,

Continued for at least seven to eight minutes, Finished with a prayer to the Divine, offering themselves into the light of God.

All type of meditation like mindfulness meditation, focus meditation, movement meditation, mantra meditation and spiritual meditation were included in treatment programme. Investigators took help from yoga experts for preparing the design of programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Stress scores for working women and men were analyzed by paired t-test and level of significance was set up at .05 level of confidence.

TABLE-I: Group means increase in Stress among Gr. WE and Gr. WC after six months treatment

Variable	Type of test	Gr. WE (n=30)			Gr. WC (n=30)		
		Mean	SD	t	Mean	SD	t
Stress	Pre-test	7.9	1.32	6.12	7.33	2.11	0.008
	Post-test	1.4	0.93		8.13	1.33	

Significant at .05 level of confidence

Table-I represents the mean values of pre and post test for stress of Gr. WE and Gr. WC. The mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. WE were 7.9 and 1.4 respectively in stress. On the other hand, mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. WC were 7.33 and 8.13 respectively in stress. The t-value of stress of Gr. WE was 6.12 and the t value of Gr. WE in relation to improvement of stress was significant at .05 level of confidence after six months treatment. The t-value of stress of Gr. WC was 0.008. To be significant at .05 level of confidence the t-value should be greater than 2.04. The t-value of Gr. WC was not improved significantly at .05 level of confidence after six months treatment.



Fig. 1: A comparison of means of pre and post test data on stress among Gr. WE and Gr. WC.

TABLE-II: Group means increase in Stress among Gr. ME and Gr. MC after six months treatment

Variable	Type of test	Gr. ME (n=30)			Gr. MC (n=30)		
		Mean	SD	t	Mean	SD	t
Stress	Pre-test	6.06	1.41	8.92	6.03	1.35	0.038
	Post-test	1.5	0.68		6.36	1.03	

Significant at .05 level of confidence

Table-II represents the mean values of pre and post test for stress of Gr. ME and Gr. MC. The mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. ME were 6.06 and 1.5 respectively in stress. On the other hand, mean values of pre-test and post-test of Gr. MC were 6.03 and 6.36 respectively in stress. The t-value of stress of Gr. ME was 8.92 and the t value of Gr. ME in relation to improvement of stress was significant at .05 level of confidence after six months treatment. The t-value of stress of Gr. MC was 0.038. To be significant at .05 level of confidence the t-value should be greater than 2.04. The t-value of Gr. MC was not improved significantly at .05 level of confidence after six months treatment.

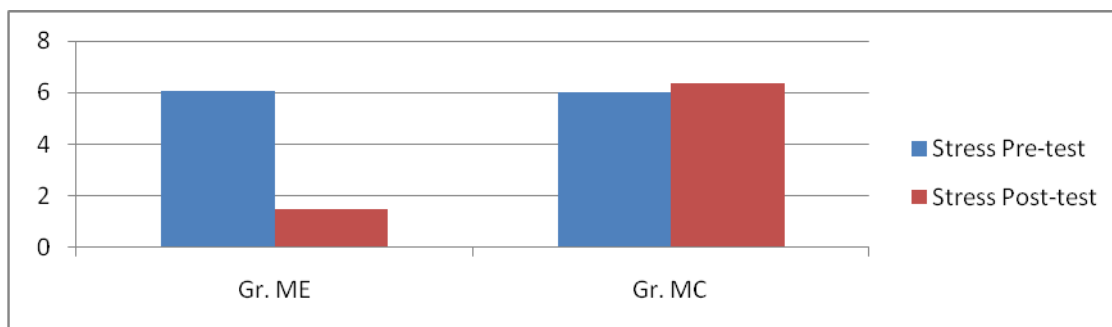


Fig. 2: A comparison of means of pre and post test data on stress among Gr. ME and Gr. MC.

Meditation or Dhana , a part of astanga yoga play great role for the reduce of stress which has been reported by Anderson and Freshman (1982), Bhole and Karambelkar (1971), Deshpande, Nagendra and Raghuram (2009), Morison and Ibrahim (1981) and Yadhav (2006). In this study, Meditation reduced stress significantly after six months treatment. Meditation have a greater impact on the mind and the senses than other exercises with the result that meditation help to develop one's physical and mental powers to make the mind clam and control the emotion. Yoga involves and includes eight paths (i.e. astanga yoga – yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi.). The astanga yoga based on idealistic approach, a real road to attain god consciousness, self-consciousness and self-concept. Meditation helps an individual overcome these emotions to facilitate a calm peaceful mind and healthy and stress free body. Meditation promotes relaxation, develops self-concept, self-confidence, positive attitude and socialability and reduces stress as well as anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Under the conditions of the present study the results seem to be concluding that the following:

1. Significantly reduced of stress was observed by administering six months treatment of meditation among working women.
2. Meditation group of men were reduced stress significantly after six months treatment of meditation.

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