

The Role of Meditation in Post-COVID-19 Condition

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Abstract

Novel COVID-19 pandemic is shifting the outlook of the world on every materialistic thing. After each departing day, there are some points for optimism and agony both. Researchers are doing their best to slow down this contagious disease. Slowly the recovery rate is also boosting up. Now a new challenge is approaching up as post-recovery phase symptoms or follows up symptoms. Among the recovered individuals the mental symptoms like depression or stress are the most striking ones. The different modalities available for inner peace or reducing the depression, the meditation is most reliable and through different studies done on various parameters most evidence-based also. The practice of meditation in post recovered persons will not only bring inner solace reducing the physiological symptoms but will also reduce spending on health.

Keywords: COVID-19 • Depression • Meditation • Post-recovery phase

Introduction

In the current scenario of a pandemic the centre of interest of every person is changed or at least is modified. COVID-19 pandemic has proved a comma if not a full stop in the progress whether at a personal level, economic front, or any other. In such a situation where social aloofness is taking a hard toll on the mental ability of humans, everyone wants some relief and eyeing towards medical fraternity for some magical remedy. Person, who has suffered from this pandemic, has undergone a great commotion including economic setbacks, health and especially on the physic level, after the isolation, undergoing unconfirmed protocol of treatments and thereafter also facing social stigma on discharge. The recovered persons have to revive their life, which goes round like attaining the milestones of life just like a developing toddler. The experiences of most COVID-19 recovered patients include psychophysical symptoms like depression, fear, and anxiety that may persist for a longer time. Dhyana (Meditation) is one of the most sort-out modus operandi for inner calmness or peace. From time immortal the chase of humans about self-improvisation has taken him towards the path of meditation as a sole reliever. Meditation is one of the components of Astanga (Eight limbed) Yoga of Patanjali, which explains it as, non-judgmental, non-presumptuous, sequential movement of thoughts, and flow of awareness [1].

Materials and Methods

In order to examine the role of meditation in post COVID-19 recovered patients as a measure either as an individual or an adjunct

therapy with conventional treatment at different setups; a search on relevant available, validated scientific literature, several systematic reviews, meta-analysis, randomized controlled trials from Med-line/Pub-Med, Google Scholar on the practice of meditations were consulted [2].

Literature Review

Any disease even after the recovery leaves behind certain symptoms that remain persistent. A study reported as a research letter mentions the continuation of one or more symptoms like fatigue, headache, etc even after the recovery as per standard protocols [3]. The study mainly aimed at physical symptoms and suggested the importance of post-COVID-19 recovery OPD in hospitals.

A separate study especially focused on the recovery of the elderly population from pandemic reveals the greater emotional effect due to increased social isolation and anxiety symptoms and increased risk of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, obesity, cognitive decline, and death.

A review follows up a detailed study that shows the effect on the multi-organ system post-COVID-19 scenario especially the effect on lungs, CNS, ocular infection, GIT infections, and renal injuries. The same study also discusses the challenges faced by COVID-19 recovered patients giving special mention to the feeling of paranoid, and the aftermath of the disease would be persistent in the back of their minds. During the quarantine period, patients are devoid of human contact, which might increase the chances of psychological

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symptoms. In the same article certain recommendations are also mentioned for the recovered patient to overcome psychological symptoms like practicing Yoga and Meditation.

Meditation is practiced since the time immortal and is described in different Vedic texts. The term "meditation" is nowadays freely used to refer to diversified manners including deliberation, concentration, and meditative movement exercises such as Yoga and breathing exercises as Pranayama. These techniques work at diverse levels such as the mind, intellect, and emotions. According to classics, the true intention of meditation is to unite oneself to one's deep inner Self.

Discussion

A paper published in the Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine gives a great view on the role of meditation in times of crisis like the current pandemic. Here the evidence-based meditation techniques like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have shown reduced anxiety depression and post-traumatic stress disorder stress blood pressure, cortisol levels, and other physiologic markers of stress [4]. Paper also mentions that after the long term practice of meditation shows changes in areas of the brain concerned with stress and anxiety. The prefrontal cortex, the cingulate cortex, and the hippocampus i.e. limbic system of the brain show activity consistent with improved emotional regulation. An article published before the outcome of pandemic mentions the role of Meditation on health. This paper depicts the role of Meditative practices in general well-being as well as on different types of ailments both on physical and mental levels. This study was a literal review of different randomized study which took place prior to it with different types of meditations either singly or as adjuvant therapy with a different schedule of durations. In concluding remarks the author mentions the growing scientific interest in meditation showing that this practice has lasting changes in cognition and emotion [5]. A separate article also mentions the effect of meditation on different organ systems of the body especially effect on the brain, breathing physiology, and even on gene expression. Here they

mention that the process of meditation goes beyond the mind to the deepest level of the inner Self [6].

Conclusion

As going through review and discussion of aftereffect of post-COVID-19, we can see that the symptoms include both the physical and physiological, depending basically on certain factors like age, viral load, etc. somatic trauma can be dealt by medicines but for mental calmness what should be the remedy. Here comes the role of meditation, which is now evidence proved healer of mind and not only lowers the physiologic markers of stress but also creates an optimistic feeling and wellbeing.

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