

## Short Communication

### Role of Meditation in Healing

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Today medical science seems to be at cross roads. Research is pointing out that trillions of dollars spent on interventions and treatments in medicine increases life expectancy by just a miniscule [1,2]. In other words health problems in society are solved more by following the laws of nature which help in eliminating the causes of diseases itself. These include good sanitation, sufficient sunshine and fresh air, proper nutrition, exercise, sleep and a tranquil state of mind.

The transformation which occurs in the body due to a tranquil state of mind has been ignored by the medical profession for long. The role of the state of the mind is being appreciated more in recent times. The body-mind-soul concept where importance of the mind which controls the root cause of most diseases and holds the secrets of healing and cure is being acknowledged.

Negative thoughts become potent weapons of self destruction and translate into various diseases. Anger, hatred, frustration and hopelessness are the toxic emotions predominantly reported before a heart attack. These days stress, worry, anxiety and fear are adding to these emotions people experience. These negative emotions stimulate a lethal immune response.

Meditations when done with deep faith in its effects help in deleting negative thoughts and promote a tranquil state of mind. Dr. Herbert Benson called this the 'Biological Relaxation Response' whose ground breaking monograph is still available as a paperback even after 35 years of initial publication [3,4].

Studies have shown its efficacy in counteracting the harmful effects of stress [5,6]. During this time dramatic changes take place in the body like secretion of stress hormones stops, brain waves change to waves of deep sleep [7], heart rate and blood pressure drops, demonstrable changes are seen in the brain and antibody titres are increased showing enhanced immune response [8].

Miracle substances like encephaline and endorphins are secreted which give relief from pain, elevate mood, cure depression and insomnia [9]. All these are internal mechanisms which promote healing and well being.

Many meditation techniques are being practiced all over the world these days, but the approaches are basically two, concentration and mindfulness meditations [10].

Concentration meditation aims at single point focus on some image, sound or mantra. The transcendental meditation of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi belongs to this category. It is seen that there is pronounced levels of activation of large areas of the brain when concentration is focused on certain selected sounds as in Divine Omdasji Sound meditation [11].

Mindfulness meditation involves becoming alert to the continuous passing stream of thoughts, emotions and images without identifying with them. This helps in developing a detached approach- Vipassana and Zen meditation belong to this category.

Investigations have shown that a person does not have to be highly trained meditator to benefit from it. Just twenty minutes of daily practice can contribute to reduction of stress, anxiety, the tendency towards anger and depression [12].

Today meditation is being accepted as a technique for maintaining holistic health and intrinsic healing. Thus meditation when combined with conventional treatment for life threatening diseases may have an indirect role in healing.

In fact the new dictum in medical practice should say that the so called 'incurable' diseases means those whose cure lies within the body and the best way to activate this sleeping giant is by meditation with deep faith in its benefits.

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