

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION OF YOGA THERAPY IN PSORIASIS****Satyapal Singh<sup>1\*</sup>, J. S. Tripathi<sup>2</sup>, N. P. Rai<sup>3</sup>**

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Article Received on  
16 Aug 2015,

Revised on 06 Sep 2015,  
Accepted on 27 Sep 2015

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**ABSTRACT**

In present era stress and altered immunity plays a major role in the pathogenesis and manifestation of different chronic diseases including psoriasis, diabetes mellitus, bronchial asthma, etc. Practice of Yoga provides a great option to cope up with these problems. It is well acknowledged that psychological stress plays an important role in the pathophysiology of numerous skin disorders. The skin disease best known as stress associated and by far the most intensively studied for this association is psoriasis, with 40–60% of cases triggered by stress. From Yogic perspective, the psoriasis is considered as a result due to imbalance in root (Muladhara) Chakra and solar plexus (Manipura Chakra). Muladhara Chakra governs survival, vitality and mental stability. Stress is considered as the biggest cause of Muladhara imbalance. Manipura Chakra physically governs the liver and digestion. Therefore, by balancing the Muladhara we can reduce the stress and by balancing the Manipura Chakra we can balance the

function of digestive system since faulty eating habits and indigestion is also considered a major factor in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. Various Yoga practices such as Asanas, Meditation, Pranayama, Savasana are well established relaxation techniques to reduce the stress. Yoga is a systematic methodology for all-round personality development i.e. physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components of a human being, in this way Yoga is considered as science of life and the art of living.

**KEYWORDS:** Yoga, Stress, Psoriasis, psychosomatic disorder.

## INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a non-infectious chronic inflammatory skin disorder clinically characterizes by erythematous sharply demarcated papules and rounded plaques covered by silvery micaceous scales. Psoriasis is notoriously chronic and is well known for its course of remissions and relapses.<sup>[1]</sup>

It has been known since antiquity in Ayurveda that a connection exists between the skin and mind. Ayurveda recognizes that the connection between the brain and the skin is more than a physiological fact. The skin is the important organ of communication with the external world and has an eternal relationship with mind (psyche). Therefore, more than a cosmetic nuisance, psoriasis produces anxiety, depression and other psychological problems that affect the quality of life. Although dermatological disorders specially psoriasis are usually not life-threatening, but they can be life-ruining due to their visibility.<sup>[2]</sup>

Yoga is one of the most ancient metaphysical sciences, which investigates the nature of soul and through its discipline, awakens the super-conscious mind of the human which unites the moral being with the immortal supreme spirit. Yoga leads to balance and also provides both the philosophy and the religion. The real joy of life appears when we can unify nature and culture, wealth and poverty, movement and stillness, attachment and detachment. Yoga can serve both the individual and society.<sup>[3]</sup>

On a physical level, studies show that Yoga stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (the calming influence), which reduces the body's stress response. This can have a profound effect on the immune system. Furthermore, new studies show that moderate exercise can quell inflammation in the body, which is common with autoimmune disease. Therefore, by reducing the stress and by immunomodulation the Yoga therapy helps in the management of psoriasis.<sup>[4]</sup>

## APPLICATION OF YOGA IN PSORIASIS

The management of such type (psoriasis type) of psychosomatic disorders becomes the prime aim of Yoga. Yoga is emphasizes as a preventive measure for the promotion of physical as well as mental health and as a therapeutic measure for the management of various disorders. For those people who are suffering from mental fatigue, tiredness, anxiety and stress, Yoga is a means to find relaxation. For those who lack concentration and clarity of mind, it is a means to concentrate. For those who aspire for some creativity in life, Yoga is a means to find that

creativity. For those who are interested in awakening and knowing their dormant nature and personality, Yoga is a form of meditation. In this way Yoga has several aspects including physical, psychological and spiritual.<sup>[5]</sup>

Annamaya Kosha is the grossest health, constituting the physical form of the body, with biological functions. This component is made of solid matters or Panchamabhutas (Earth, water, fire, air and space). The Manomaya Kosha is referred as mind. This Kosha is the dwelling place of thoughts, emotions, desire, likes and dislikes etc. Any disturbance in this Kosha results into a pathological state called stress. A chronic worry, tension, anxiety disturbs the harmony of this component.<sup>[6]</sup>

The imbalance at the Manomaya Kosa is the root cause of stress induced psychosomatic disorders like psoriasis. Amplified likes and dislikes at the Manomaya Kosa results in distressful emotional surges called 'Aadhi'. The long standing, uncontrolled surges of stressful reactions like Kama (intense desire), Krodha (anger), Bhaya (fear), Matsarya (jealousy) etc. are responsible for disturbed lifestyle. These agitations cause violent fluctuations in the flow of Prana in the 'Nadis' which are considered as channels of Prana and are distributed all over the body through their branching system. Each and every cell in the body, the components of Annamaya Kosa (physical body), requires adequate quota of its Pranic energy to carry on its biochemical processes in an efficient way. It is well acknowledged that the biological system fails to function, if it does not get the adequate quantum of Prana. Thus, the disturbances in the Manomaya Kosa percolate into Annamaya Kosa through disturbed/vitiated Prana flow. Therefore, Yoga techniques should offer at all these levels, to correct the imbalance through a set of Yogic practices which we have been termed as integrated approach of Yoga therapy (IAYT).<sup>[7]</sup>

### **Important Asanas and Pranayama**

- Shavasana
- Sarvangasana
- Pranayama
- Siddhasana (with Kumbhak)
- Makarasana
- Trikonasana
- Padmasana
- Yoga-mudra

### **Effect of Asanas and Pranayam**

1. They reduce stress and tension from our mind.
2. Good cure for depression and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Clear mental clutter and allow us to get back in touch with ourselves. It will improve the muscle tone, flexibility, strength and stamina.
3. Meditation helps in stress reduction, improving physical and mental health and helps in giving us control of ourselves. Improve concentration, creativity and above all a feeling of wellbeing and calm. Helps in curing stress related diseases and symptoms, as it lowers body fat, improves blood circulation and stimulates the immune system.

Shavasana creates a state of complete relaxation. Remain motionless in this position, relinquishing all responsibilities and worries for 10 to 15 minutes and discontinue the exercise when your legs grow numbness. This asana helps bring down high blood pressure, relieves the mind, particularly for those who are engaged in excessive mental activity. The Shavasana should be done both at the beginning and at the end of the daily round of Yogic Asanas. Shavasana and others help to reduce stress and thus play an important role in the management of psoriasis.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Overall Benefits of Yoga therapy**

The benefits of Yoga therapy can be summarized as follows.<sup>[9]</sup>

1. It gives flexibility and strength.
2. It also gives good posture and better look to a person.
3. Provides firm muscle tone, bright eyes and clear complexion which contribute to the radiant appearance of the person. This combined with good posture and grace of movement, makes for a pleasing outward appearance.
4. Asanas stretch and strengthen muscles and put joints through their full range of movement.
5. Provide smooth and efficient breathing.
6. Pranayama strengthens the diaphragm and encourages deeper, freer breathing.
7. Provides better sleep and concentration.
8. Yoga Posture, Yogic breathing, relaxation and meditation all help to calm and still the mind and thus help in reducing the stress and also help in immunomodulation.

9. One can cope well with stress.
10. The improvements to your health and the ability to relax deeply that come with yoga make you more resilient.
11. It massages all the internal glands and organs of the body in a thorough manner.
12. Promotes physical, mental, emotional and psychosocial health, reduces the psychosocial stress and help in immunomodulation and thus ultimately helps in the prevention and the management of various psychosomatic disorders including psoriasis.

Therefore, when Yoga was applied it was found to be an effective therapy to increase the immunity, the stamina and the strength of the different systems within the body. Asanas relax the body and mind and by meditation one attains relaxation and concentration and develops awareness. Now a day's one of the major applications of Yoga is as therapeutics in several disorders especially psychosomatic disorders like psoriasis.

## DISCUSSION

The Yoga Therapy or 'Yoga Chikitsa' refers to the management of diseases by means of Yogic practices which may be physical or mental or both. It aims at obtaining relief from pain and suffering. Yoga is a means of attaining perfect health by maintaining harmony and achieving optimum functioning on all three levels (namely physical, mental and spiritual) through complete self-control.

It has proved itself most effective in saving human being from the fatal hands of contagious and infectious diseases. However, rapidly increasing incidence of stress related ailments is posing a great challenge to the modern medical system. It is here that Yoga appears to make a vital contribution to the modern medical system.

Yogic Kriyas, Asanas and Pranayama constitute the physical basis of Yoga. The practice of Kriyas and Asanas leads to excellent circulation. It also energizes and stimulates major endocrine glands of the body. Yogic exercises promote inner health and harmony and their regular practice helps in prevention and management of many common ailments. They also help to eliminate physical, mental or emotional tensions. Pranayama slows down the ageing process. In ordinary respiration, one breathes roughly 15 times a minute, taking in approximately 20 cubic inches of air. In pranayama the breathing rate is slowed down to once or twice a minute and the breath inhaled is deep and full, taking nearly 100 cubic inches of

air. According to Yoga, the practice of Asanas, Breathing techniques as well as Internal Cleansing (body detoxification) techniques will serve to address skin issues.<sup>[10]</sup>

Asana, Pranayama and Dhyana (meditation) increase body awareness, reduce muscular tension and increase the co-ordination between mind and body. Help in better management of stress and ensures an overall feeling of wellbeing.

There are several aspects to Yoga and Yoga Asanas for beginners is only one of them. There are eight aspects or parts of Yoga which are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. These are the 'elements' of Yoga and one will need to know about each of them to experience the full benefits of Yoga. Yoga is also called a science or technology of liberation. This is because, unlike purely theoretical philosophies, Yoga seeks to provide a practical path towards the common goal of liberation.

The central aim of all the Yogic practices is Purification (Shaucha) and it is the first principle of self-discipline (Niyama) in Patanjali's eight-limbed approach. The Yogees have discovered that impurities in our internal body adversely affect our state of mind and prevent the attainment of real wisdom and spiritual liberation.

It well acknowledged that Yoga is beneficial for everyone, yet there is very little awareness and understanding on exactly how Yoga heals, even in the Yoga and medical communities. The key is to understand the relationships between stress, Yoga and disease. Yoga gives a number of benefits however, the benefits of Yoga depends on how regularly you are practicing and way of practicing. The benefit increases when you combine Yoga Asana (physical exercise) with meditation, relaxation and Pranayama.

Mental state and behavior of individuals greatly reflects the type of food they consume and the kind of habitat they live in. The Sattvika, Rajas and Tamas food and life style overtly manifest in an individual. Ayurveda rightly proclaims that people and their behavior are the products of their food and life styles. Therefore, the choice of right food i.e. the Sattvika food and better lifestyle is very important for managing the various disorders including psoriasis.<sup>[11]</sup>

Yoga is a practical training of mind and body. In general it has three main outcomes; it makes us more aware of our natural wisdom, promotes the physical and mental health and also helps to recover from a particular illness and teaches us how to co-operate with others. Yoga

teaches us truth through mind and body rather than theory. It brings about deep change of attitude. The entire thrust of our life is to devote total attention to every action and at the same time to trust in the power of sacred.

## CONCLUSION

Yoga is emphasized as a preventive measure as well as therapeutics for several disorders. It plays a major role in promotion of positive health at physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels and in rehabilitation. Different Yogic practices reduce the physical and mental stress and help in immunomodulation which is the mainstay in the etio-pathogenesis of psoriasis. Therefore, these yoga practices increase the quality of life in the patients of psoriasis which results in reduction in the frequencies of flares of psoriasis, improvement in clinical symptoms and increase ability to cope up with psoriasis.

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