



# JOURNAL OF PHARMA SCIENCE

Journal home page: <http://epixpub.com/jps/index.php>

## Naturathic and Yogic Moves for Management of HIV/AIDS: A Review

Neelkanth M. Pujari<sup>1\*</sup>, Satyendra Misra<sup>1</sup>, Sohan Lal Yadav<sup>2</sup>

1. Institute of Human Consciousness and Yogic Sciences, University of Lucknow (U.P.), India.

2. Naturpathy & Yoga Centre, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (U.P.) India.

### ABSTRACT

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has taken an epidemic form all over the world. In case of AIDS and HIV infected people, the immune system become weak and resistance to diseases become feeble. It takes a great deal of courage to face a disease that seems to have no cure as yet. Many people with AIDS/HIV experience intense feelings of fear, hopelessness, anxiety, loneliness and depression. Yoga is an ancient system of breathing and stretching exercises, postures, and meditation. Naturopathy uses natural healing forces within the body to help it heal and stay healthier. Both of these cannot take the place of professional counseling in dealing with severe distress but the techniques can do much to help one reduce excessive fear and anxiety, learn stress-coping skills, and build inner strength and immune through the relaxation and self-awareness training of meditation along with toning of inner body forces.

**Keywords:** HIV/AIDS, Immune, opportunistic infections, Yoga practice, Naturopathic Science.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [neelkanth743@rediffmail.com](mailto:neelkanth743@rediffmail.com)

Received 14 March 2017, Accepted 25 March 2017

Please cite this article as: Pujari NM *et al.*, Naturathic and Yogic Moves for Management of HIV/AIDS: A Review . Journal of Pharma Science 2017.

## INTRODUCTION

**AIDS** is a disease of the human immune system caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is transmitted through direct contact of a mucous membrane or the bloodstream with a body fluid containing HIV, such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, preseminal fluid, and breast milk. This transmission can involve anal, vaginal or oral sex, blood transfusion, contaminated hypodermic needles, exchange between mother and baby during pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding etc.<sup>1</sup>

HIV is different from most other viruses because it attacks the immune system. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cells) that the immune system must have to fight disease. One way to measure the damage to the immune system is to count CD4 cells in the blood which form an important part of the immune system. Healthy people have between 500 and 1,500 CD4 cells in milliliter of blood. If the CD4 cell count goes down to less than 200 then the body becomes incapable of fighting the other germs (opportunistic infections) that may enter the body and this phase is called AIDS. Repeated infections by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites can lead to serious weight loss, brain and skin cancer, and other health problems. Without treatment, these opportunistic infections can be lethal.<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after getting infected by the virus most people have no symptoms. After the initial flu-like symptoms, some persons stay healthy for ten years or longer. But during this time, HIV is damaging the immune system. People with AIDS have an increased risk of developing various cancers such as Kaposi's sarcoma, cervical cancer and cancers of the immune system known as lymphomas. Additionally, people with AIDS often have systemic symptoms of infection like fevers, sweats (particularly at night), swollen glands, chills, weakness, and weight loss.<sup>8</sup>

As of 2009, AVERT (Formerly known as AIDS Education and Research Trust) estimated that there are 33.3 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS, with 2.6 million new HIV infections per year and 1.8 million annual deaths due to AIDS. According to UNAIDS 2009 report, worldwide some 60 million people have been infected, with some 25 million deaths, and 14 million to show the spread of the virus.<sup>3</sup> India is the leading country in Asia with 2.4 million AIDS patients. About 24 lakh people are suffering from this disease.<sup>4</sup> The National Family Health Survey III in 2006 estimates by NACO indicate that prevalence is highest among men (61% of all infections), the 15–49 age group (89%), and among high-risk subgroups such as Injecting Drug Users (IDUs, 9% of all infections), men who have sex with men (6%) and female sex workers (5%).<sup>5,6</sup>

Naturopathy and Yoga, are the alternative system of medicine with in-depth potential to prevent diseases. These are cost-effective, safe, free from side effects. These treatment modules too lessen the side effects of drugs. Nature Cure and Yoga Therapy, a refreshing process as well as a cost-effective solution; try to find out the very root cause of diseases and by restoring harmony among various component of Naturopathy and Yogic lifestyles- physical, social, emotional, spiritual, mental and psychological. The system provides psychological and emotional well-being. Being drugless therapies, it enhances sustainable and functional ability of the body. Since AIDS is a condition where immune system get disturb, the system of Yoga and Naturopathy can play a pivotal role in developing immune power of the body by strengthening the body, mind and soul and too by increasing physiological and psychological levels.<sup>9</sup>

### **Yogic Treatments for AIDS<sup>12</sup>**

Yoga is to help the individual balance the body's chakras or energy centers.<sup>13</sup> Yoga can aid in detoxification, strengthen particular organs, improve stamina, and alleviate chronic fatigue. Although it is certainly not necessary for someone who is HIV positive to take a specially designed yoga class, it could be beneficial. Yoga is quickly gaining ground as an important complementary therapy in the treatment of HIV and AIDS because of its adaptability and its physiological and psychological benefits. *"Sometimes I don't know what it's like to feel normal anymore, but I do know that after an hour of restorative poses, I feel like a new person mentally, spiritually, and physically."* as stated by a AIDS patient at UK Steve McCeney practicing Yoga.<sup>10</sup> Yoga has also helped to manage the symptoms of HIV, along with the side effects of his medication. There are certain poses that assist in relieving fatigue, diarrhoea, anxiety and depression.

#### **i) Primary Sequence of Poses for HIV/ AIDS:**

1. Handstand (Adho Mukha Vkrasana)
2. Peacock pose (Pinca Mayurasana) (optional pose, to be done only if person is strong enough and can perform other poses).
3. Supported downwards dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana) (with head supported by a block).
4. Headstand (Sirsasana) (person with neck problems or weakness may try chair headstand).
5. Inverted staff pose (Viparita Dandasana) (supported with chair)
6. Supported bridge pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana) (supported by setu bandha bench or blocks).
7. Simple cross leg pose (Sukhasana) (leaning forward, head supported by chair).
8. Supported shoulder stand (Salaam Sarvangasana) (use chair or halasana bench for support).

9. Supported plow pose (Ardha Halasana) (use chair or halasana bench for support).
10. Legs up the wall (Viparita Karani) (with buttocks supported by blankets or bolsters).
11. Supine bound angle pose (Supta Baddha Konasana) (with back and head supported by blankets or bolsters)
12. Supported relaxation pose (Savasana) (with back and head supported by blankets or bolsters).

#### ii) Alternative Poses for HIV/AIDS:

1. Supported head/knee forward bend (Janu Sirsasana) (support head with blankets or bolsters).
2. Three part forward bend (Triang Mukhaikapada Pascimottanasana) (support head with blankets or bolsters).
3. Seated forward bend, or Halasana (use chair or halasana bench for support).
4. Supported half bound lotus forward bend (Ardha Baddha Padma Pascimottanasana) (support head with blankets or boosters).
5. Supported shoulder stand (West stretch) (Pascimottanasana) (support head with blankets or bolsters).
6. Supported plow pose (Ardha Salamba Sarvangasana) (use chair for support).

#### Natural Treatments for HIV

Although one can be gifted genetically with a powerful immune system, nutrients from food ensure the full development of it. Without proper nutrients, immune system of animals or humans can never function to the optimum. Since plants constitute the basic food chain, it provides the most valuable source of natural nutrients and even of medicinal value. Herbivores living only on plants without any use of drugs testify this.

Health herbs have been used extensively in hopes of improving immune response and reducing symptoms. No known herbal remedy has been shown to cure AIDS or even reduce chances of AIDS-related infections.

Aloe vera, St. Johnswort, echinacea, licorice, and ginseng are just a few of the herbs used to treat HIV/AIDS. Taking immunity-boosting herbs (such as astragalus, echinacea, and ginkgo) may help revive an ailing immune system, and certain herbs (such as garlic) may help battle bacteria and viruses. Deglycyrrhizinated licorice can soothe the mouth and throat ulcers that often accompany full-blown AIDS.

Dietary supplements are commonly used in an effort to boost the immune system. Foods or substances derived from food materials (garlic, Chinese bitter melon and turmeric) are used, as

well as nonfood dietary supplements such as shark cartilage or blue-green algae (*Spirulina*). Vitamins, minerals, and amino acids are also used in an attempt to boost the immune system.<sup>11</sup>

### Dietary Supplements for AIDS

Dietary supplements are commonly used in an effort to boost the immune system. Foods or substances derived from food materials (garlic, Chinese bitter melon and turmeric) are used, as well as nonfood dietary supplements such as shark cartilage or blue-green algae (*Spirulina*). Vitamins, minerals, and amino acids are also used in an attempt to boost the immune system. Some specific supplement suggestions are:

Name of specific supplements	Use of specific supplements
Protein/Calorie (Boost, Ensure, etc.)	Weight gain. *not for people with severe thrush or yeast infections.
Protein Powders (whey, glutamine, soya)	Increase protein intake (can help build/preserve muscle mass) *not for people with severe liver or kidney disease
Therapeutic Multivitamins	Provides 100% of the recommended daily allowance of many vitamins.
Selenium	Antioxidant. This is the only supplement directly related to improved mortality in HIV infection. The recommended daily allowance can be obtained in 1-2 Brazil nuts or in pill form.
Alpha Lipoic/Thioctic Acid	Antioxidant. Good for liver detoxification and neuropathy relief.
Calcium	Preserves bone, muscle, nerve function and diarrhoea.
Coenzyme Q10	Support body's energy pathways.

### Naturopathic Treatments for AIDS

There is much evidence that suggests that many complementary and alternative therapies have a therapeutic effect on the body, relieving stress, anxiety and depression in HIV and AIDS patients.<sup>13</sup> People living with AIDS have the opportunity of using aromatherapy and massage. Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils extracted from plants that are applied to the body giving relief to particular conditions. One oil which has been valuable to people suffering from AIDS, is Tea Tree. This has been found to have antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal action. As the HIV virus depletes the immune system, bacterial and fungal opportunistic diseases develop in individuals. For example *Candida Albicans* is a fungal disease which affects the tongue, throat, esophagus and the bowel. This disease causes discomfort and pain in AIDS patients. However, Tea Tree is an effective method of controlling the disease.

There is evidence that massage has many benefits. Massage therapy is a viable health option to help alleviate pain and discomfort from everyday life, overuse, habitual patterns, occupational stresses, and many chronic pain syndromes. Massage therapy is the manipulation of the soft tissues

of the body to gain a therapeutic response. Soft tissue includes muscles, skin and connective tissue, tendons, ligaments and membranes.<sup>14</sup>

Massage is the manipulation of tissues (as by rubbing, stroking, kneading, or tapping) with the hand or an instrument for remedial or hygienic purposes. Therapeutic massage is not only beneficial in relieving a variety of physical symptoms including chronic pain, but it may also be effective for relaxation and stress reduction. Massage can help people with HIV/AIDS relieve chronic muscle tension and ease the mental and emotional stress that accompany the illness. Body manipulation/massage techniques that are being used to treat HIV/AIDS include acupuncture, the Alexander technique, Deep muscle therapy, Polarity therapy, Reiki, Rolfing, Shiatsu, Rubenfeld Synergy, Swedish massage, and Therapeutic massage.

The Benefits of Massage:

- Anxiety levels are reduced.
- Muscular tension and fatigue are reduced.
- Pain minimized by the hormone endorphins.
- Reduction in emotional stress
- A feeling of warmth gained by improved local blood circulation.

**DISCUSSION:**

AIDS is different in every infected person. Some people die soon after getting infected, while others live fairly normal lives for many years, even after they "officially" have AIDS. A few HIV-positive people stay healthy for many years even without taking anti-HIV medications.

National AIDS Control Organization, through its partners, public and private sector organizations, NGOs/CBOs, faith based organizations, media and other stakeholders has been at the forefront of the battle against HIV/AIDS, promoting the ABC (Abstinence, Being faithful & using Condoms) strategy for HIV prevention. Condom is the only prophylaxis against the transmission of the virus apart from giving protection from STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

Sex education helps the new generation to gain knowledge on this vital aspect in a scientific manner, instead of relying on half-cooked and wrong information from peers and other sources. The demand of the time is to open up discussions on the issues of sex and sexuality and break the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS. Information and knowledge is the only way of saving the lives of our youths.

**CONCLUSION:**

Prevention is better than cure. Healthy habits of practice of sex in the right way prescribed and

accepted by dharma can eradicate this problem. Yoga takes us to the fundamental question of why does man go in for sex? It is for getting the thrill and happiness as this is the best of the sense pleasures known to man. *Tattiriya upanisad* goes to the extent of saying that whenever we are in a state of happiness due to any sense pleasure we touch the source of silence within us which is nothing but the divinity that is dormant in all of us. Hence one shall enjoy sex as a manifestation of divinity with reverence and a feeling of worship which will take away all wrong practices of sex.<sup>13</sup> Prevention of this disease is centered around educating professional sex workers in our country which is a big problem because of the associated illiteracy. Yoga can be a great boon to these girls as they need to have mastery over their life style (their mind) to function as a responsible individual in the society. The practice of Yoga and Naturopathy can help to improve the other associated ailments.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Divisions of HIV/AIDS Prevention (2003). "HIV and Its Transmission." Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Retrieved on 2006-05-23.
2. San Francisco AIDS Foundation (2006-04-14). "How HIV is spread". Retrieved on 2006-05-23.
3. UNAIDS (2006). "Overview of the global AIDS epidemic", 2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic (PDF).
4. "National AIDS Control Organization Breaking Down the Numbers." HIV Data. 2007. [http://www.nacoonline.org/Quick\\_Links/To\\_Read\\_More/](http://www.nacoonline.org/Quick_Links/To_Read_More/)
5. "UNAIDS 2.5 million people living with HIV in India: Revised estimates show lower HIV prevalence in India." Press release; 6 July 2007 [http://data.unaids.org/pub/PressRelease/2007/070706\\_indiapressrelease\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/PressRelease/2007/070706_indiapressrelease_en.pdf)
6. M Fritts, CC Crawford, D Quibell, A Gupta, WB Jonas, I Coulter, and SA Andrade "Traditional Indian medicine and homeopathy for HIV/AIDS: a review of the literature."; *AIDS Res Ther.* 2008; 5: 25.
7. Morgan, D., Mahe, C., Mayanja, B. and Whitworth, J. A. (2002). "Progression to symptomatic disease in people infected with HIV-1 in rural Uganda: prospective cohort study". *BMJ* 324 (7331): 193–196. PubMed.
8. Holmes, C. B., Losina, E., Walensky, R. P., Yazdanpanah, Y., Freedberg, K. A. (2003). "Review of human immunodeficiency virus type 1-related opportunistic infections in sub-Saharan Africa". *Clin. Infect. Dis.* 36 (5): 656–662. PubMed.
9. Medindia [http://www.medindia.net/news/view\\_news\\_main.asp?x=16918#ixzz2lMqVnMom](http://www.medindia.net/news/view_news_main.asp?x=16918#ixzz2lMqVnMom)



10. *Yoga Journal*, July/August 2001
11. Saraswathy, A. (1994b) "Traditional medicine in the management of Aids, Ancient Science of Life" 14, 1/2, 91-98.
12. <http://www.lifepositive.com/body/body-holistic/aids/yoga-therapies.asp>
13. Sowell, Richard; Moneyham, Linda; Hennessy, Michael; Guillory, Joyce; Demi, Alice; Seals, Brenda, "Spiritual Activities as a Resistance Resource for Women With Human Immunodeficiency Virus"., *Nursing Research*. 49(2):73-82, March/April 2000.
14. Koar, William. "Meditation, T-cells, anxiety, depression and HIV infection. Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine" *Journal*, 1995, 6(1).
15. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File: HIV/AIDS Traditional Indian medicine and homeopathy for HIV/AIDS: a review of the literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:HIV/AIDS_Traditional_Indian_medicine_and_homeopathy_for_HIV/AIDS:_a_review_of_the_literature)

***JPS is***

- Peer-reviewed
- monthly
- Rapid publication

Submit your manuscript at: [jps@epixpub.com](mailto:jps@epixpub.com)

