

A Review Article

YOGIC PRACTICES FOR WELL-BEING OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Authors:

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Abstract: In this review article the focus basically lies on the need of yoga with growing age and declining health conditions. With growing age we come across variety of environmental, physiological, psychological and social aspects of aging process. Yoga is believed to retard the aging process. By previous studies proved that effects of yoga on geriatric problems. In this article we are going for the over view of senior citizens healthy needs. To maintain good health, to create sense of well-being and reduce debilitating effects of disease on physical, mental, social, economical planes is achieved with help of modified yogic techniques.

Keywords: Senior Citizens yogic techniques.

Introduction:

The Senior Citizen will bring an increase in the burden of chronic disease, economic growth in India accompanied by rapid urbanization, may also contribute to the increase in non-communicable diseases. Aging is a continuous process that begins with conception and ends with death. The term senior citizen refers to the science that deals with physiological, psychological and socioeconomic aspects of aging.

Persons of 60 years of age and older are defined as elderly by World Health Organization (WHO). Successful aging is multidimensional, basically, encompassing the social and productive activity. Regression results reveal that the health status of the senior citizen was significantly worse in India. The presence of chronic diseases, unhealthy lifestyle and inadequate physical activity all had negative effects on health, only inadequate physical activity was significant when other covariates were controlled¹.

Vaillant² describes the importance of physical, social and emotional health, suggesting that aging well also involves the ability to forgive, feel grateful, and experience joy.

Old age should be regarded as a normal; inevitable biological phenomenon. It is very important that senior citizen should live a healthy and functional life than to live with chronic and degenerative problems. Since, senior citizens are more susceptible to chronic and degenerative problems in their life..

Physiological, Psychological and other aspects which changes with ageing process:

With the growing age, the secretion of most of the digestive enzymes and juices declines. The absorption and utilization of proteins, calcium, iron, and vitamin B₁₂ is affected adversely. There is impaired functioning of liver resulting in poor bile secretion, which in turn hampers fat digestion thinning of Gastro intestinal tract muscles occur and the gastric motility is decreased Decline in physical activity and dietary deficiencies, particularly that of fiber, thiamine etc. may also contribute to decreased gastric motility. The absorption capacity of kidney decrease.

Socio psychological changes:

Food thy being the essential part of living is being changing with the grow of era and modernization. The dietary habits and preferences of an individual is the outcome of individuals social, economic and regional area. With changing time and growing age they find it difficult to adjust to the newly developed varieties of food, the restricted items according to the disease. Foods with happy memories convey a sense of security and well being. They often have long held, firmly established beliefs about the merits and demerits of certain foods, which may have profound effect on their nutritional intake. Any dietary modifications should be suggested with great care to elderly persons as dietary patterns are deeply engraved and may have many social and psychological implications. Major changes in the eating pattern should be avoided. However, in case of conditions like ulcers, diabetes, hypertension or allergies, the required dietary modifications must be initiated as an essential part of the treatment.

Psychological factors:

Loneliness: India is land of religion which deals with respecting and taking care of the elders. However, today the growing technology, narrow mentality ends into neutral family. Rural migration as well as rapid urbanization has altered the once respectful attitude of the young towards old. This results in erratic eating patterns and poorly balanced diet.

Depression: Loss of authoritative status, which the elderly had enjoyed during the prime years of their life. More expectations, high feeling of insecurity and the past memories are the major factors for depression.

Anxiety: The un-achieved thoughts or desire designed by an individual on the basis of his surrounding, pre imagined goals, and every command to be followed by his society, leads to the beginning of anxiety leading to severe depression and psychological disorders.

The elderly may often feel powerless, unable to make decisions. This may aggravate depression and lead to frustration.

Thus, to maintain health, to create sense of well-being and to reduce as far as possible the debilitating effects on senior citizens health is very important which can be achieved by indulging of yoga in daily routine. The disease which is observed to be common in senior citizens are cardiovascular disorders, paralysis, bone deformities, diabetes, hypertension, kidney dysfunction, liver disorders, different types of cancer.

An overview of Senior Citizen:

Urbanization is associated with unhealthy nutrition and physical inactivity, leading to obesity and increases in the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes³. Heart disease and stroke were two other leading causes of mortality and disease burden in the age of sixty plus⁴. The Research in the area of senior citizen has been successful in providing evidence of physical changes which occur with increasing chronological age. These changes include, among others, changes in cardiovascular structure⁵. A slow progressive decline in body mass⁶, and a decrease in the strength per unit of muscle mass⁷. The research data suggest that these physical decrements may contribute to a reduction in the overall quality of life of senior citizens⁸. For senior citizens the answer is that many of the age-related physiological changes respond quite well to an intervention, which involves a whole systems approach, modifying the physical, mental and emotional thinking patterns and even possibly influencing the spiritual dimension of life.

The research has been focus primarily on methods of enhancing and maintaining good health, preserving the quality of life of senior citizens, and improving these systems that contribute to the successful completion of daily routine activities. The musculoskeletal and cardio-respiratory systems respond favorably to a variety of interventions⁹. The senior citizen who has maintained an active lifestyle, while presenting with a lower maximal heart rate, has significantly larger stroke volume. As such the senior citizen has the advantage of a larger maximal cardiac output, which serves in part to compensate for the age-related decrease in maximal heart rate. The role of physical activity component in the prevention of osteoporosis. The skeletal system provides a framework for muscles and tendons to have origins and insertions, without which movement would not be able to be generated. This relationship between degradation and deposition shifts from degradative, with women losing bone mineral more rapidly than men¹⁰. The senior citizen is a greater risk for a variety of fractures. While this age-related change in bone health seems like a dire forecast for the senior citizen's later years, much like the muscular system, the skeletal systems responds quite well to regular physical activity.

The scientific consensus is that many senior citizens feel that decline in their cognitive abilities, and Alzheimer is also one of them¹¹. The area of cognition most likely to show age-related decrements are declarative or episodic memory and mental processing skills such as perceptual speed. There is growing evidence to support the idea that neural plasticity continues across the lifespan, suggesting that cognitive and physical stimulation help to maintain perceptual memory skills. The depressive illness, recognizable in senior citizens by symptoms that include sad, downcast moods, tearfulness, recurrent thoughts of suicide, diminished pleasure, feelings of hopelessness, restlessness, indecisiveness. Depression can be triggered from environmental circumstances such as loneliness, bereavement, retirement, disability of a spouse, and feeling unwanted or no longer useful¹².

The interaction between disease status and social support or personal coping resources on mortality could not be shown. There is an important connection between spirituality and growing age health. On the positive side, spiritual activities predict longevity.

Use of yoga in senior citizens life :

Yoga attracts the man as an easy way to good health. But as the foregoing discussion shows, yoga is neither easy nor is its goal good health. The fact that it also leads to good health is incidental. However, some selected yogic practices have been used in a variety of diseases with reasonable success as discussed below.

Hypertension: Yoga practice reduces the High Blood Pressure in the age-related problem of senior citizen¹³.

Osteoporosis: Osteoporosis is one of the most common skeletal disorders. Fracture of the hip specifically has been shown to be a major problem, leading to increased morbidity and mortality in senior citizens. Yoga practice increases bone mineral density¹⁴.

Sleep and sleep disorders: Most of the senior citizens have the sleep and sleep disorders, symptoms like difficulty in initiating sleep, maintaining sleep and early morning awakening. That could result in tiredness, fatigue, depression, greater anxiety, irritability, pain sensitivity, muscle tremors, immunosuppression and lack of daytime alertness. Yoga practice improves sleep and sleep disorders¹⁵, improves the working memory¹⁶ and induces positive mental state¹⁷.

Stroke: Stroke is one of the most prevalent conditions worldwide causing devastating impairments and negative consequences for survivors. Yoga is a useful tool for the rehabilitation process after stroke. Physical changes in the form of improved mobility, motor coordination and cognitive changes in the form of improvement of speech impairments seem to be the main components that stroke survivors could benefited¹⁸.

Diabetic: Yoga plan for total health, yoga is now an important tool in diabetic management, just what the great sushruta prescribed to diabetics over 2000 years ago. In fact, a majority of non-insulin dependent diabetics are now being adequately controlled with yogic techniques, without the aid of drugs. Yoga, indeed, works wonders with weight, the bug bear of diabetics. It helps over-weights reduce, under-weight put on and normal weights maintain their weight¹⁹. This is not its only benefit. Yoga wards off heart diseases and circulatory risks of which diabetics are easy targets, by stepping up blood circulation and lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Yoga is the best de stressor, it relieves emotional tension and stress which trigger diabetes and account for the sudden up and down swings in blood sugar. Yoga lowers blood sugar by increasing the number of insulin receptors and Yoga increases glucose uptake by the muscles, thus lowering glucose blood levels²⁰.

Conclusion:

The aim of yoga however is to train the body mind and spirit. The yoga plan for total health includes a carefully programme of asanas, conditioning meditative asanas, cultural asanas with breathing rhythms, simple pranayamas, selected kriyas (purificatory processes) bandhas (muscular controls) and neuromuscular controls, integration for the four positive bhavas (personality traits overcoming the Kleshas (afflictions). This naturally re-establishes the homeostatic balance, tones up the body and the entire system and restores mental equilibrium. Yoga is believed to retard the aging process. If a person from the young age adopts Yogic life style he is sure to have a peaceful and healthy ageing. Yoga plays a vital role to prevent most of the age related health problems.

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