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A REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF OMKAR INTERVENTION ON WELLBEING

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Abstract

It has been scientifically proven, based on the literature currently available, that Omkar has a positive impact on well-being. However, more research is required to demonstrate how sacred sounds, notably "OM," affect our well-being. This paper intends to examine the scientific research done on the impact of sacred sound OM on wellbeing. The effectiveness of om chanting as a tool to reduce stress and advance psychological well-being in both clinical and non-clinical groups has been demonstrated through this study. This review will be done to examine and summarise the literature already available on the effects of Omkar intervention on the health and well-being of practitioners. The work this paper studies has been primarily separated into two categories: fundamental knowledge of sound OM, and the impact of chanting OM on well-being. To examine the impact of Omkar on well-being, this paper evaluated the empirical material that has been published. The search for the literature was restricted to published publications in the English language and was conducted using databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, Pub Med, Web of Science, PsycINFO and shodhganga.

Key Words: Om chanting, Review, Wellbeing

Introduction

One of the old eastern traditional methods, meditation, is used in various ways by practically all major global religions. It plays a crucial role in switching sympathetic activity to parasympathetic activity, making it a crucial tool for the management of stress, anxiety, and depression (Pascoe & Crewther, 2016). To better understand the diverse impacts of meditation on well-being, researchers, psychologists and neuroscientists have been interested in this topic during the past several decades. Many different types of meditation techniques are popular and used nowadays due to their perceived positive effects. There are two types of meditation techniques like mantra meditation or transcendental meditation (TM) focus on a particular sound, phrase or word to achieve greater awareness. Open mindfulness meditation involves being aware of the constant flow of pictures, ideas, emotions, feelings and sensations without associating with them (Sanchetee & Pragya, 2018). Based on the empirical research that is currently accessible, we have concentrated on Omkar chanting meditation in this review article and reviewed its benefits on well-being. Well-being included the holistic development of an individual. The feeling of good health, joy and satisfaction is referred to as well-being.

It entails having a positive outlook on life, feeling content with it, finding meaning or purpose in it, and being able to handle stress (Davis, 2019).

Introduction to the Sound OM

In yoga philosophy Om is regarded as a sacred syllable or "mantra," which is thought of as a universal sound, the origin of all words, devoid of any reference to any particular religion or God. The word OM is made up of the consonants A, U, and M and is pronounced as AUM. It represents the creation, preservation, and destruction of this cosmos and is the syllable of the past, present, and future (Amin et al., 2016). Om's sound vibrations, which go from the belly to the brain, have a significant positive effect on bringing our bodies into balance (Dwivedi & Singh, 2016). Chanting OM is a form of meditation (different mantras used to focus the mind), which is practiced either mentally or with loud repetition. Loud OM chanting has an impact or effect through sound vibrations that reverberate in particular areas of the body, resulting in many physical and psychological advantages and opening the door for an internal journey—an experience that is tranquil, pleasant, relaxing, and balanced. (Gurjar & Ladhake, 2008). The sound is produced by the vibrating of air molecules. Compression and rarefaction zones may be found in the airwaves that are produced. When OM is chanted, vibration waves in the air are produced. Chanting produces a good vibration in the body, which has highly beneficial results (Wani et al., 2020).

Gurjar et al., (2009) explain about Om meditation that it entails maintaining a still mind and listening to our own OM chant. Understanding our voice entails understanding our genuine essence or self. If so, we are never apart from the sound, which implies that we are never apart from the entire cosmos. So, to comprehend our fundamental essence is to perceive the substance of the universe. Our sensation of centering grows greater the more frequently we chant. However, when we effectively perform chanting meditation, we are able to hear both our own voice and the voices surrounding us. In the end, we discover that the purpose of chanting meditation is to clarify our goal rather than for personal enjoyment or to make us feel good. So, when it's time to chant, tune out all other voices including our own, and simply like focus on the sound of the bell or drum. When it happens, our intelligence will increase and we'll become enlightened.

Impact of Chanting Omkar on Well-Being

Telles et al. (1998) released a groundbreaking study on the effects of mentally repeating OM or ONE, or engaging in some unfocused thought. They concluded that, in comparison to the pre-test control situation, the respiration rate and heart rate dramatically dropped throughout both periods of mentally chanting OM and ONE. However, a considerable reduction in skin resistance level only happened when repeating OM in your head, not ONE. This implied that the practitioners understood the purpose, significance, and benefit of OM mental chanting. This could be related to an increase in motivation, alertness, attention arousal and personal importance.

Although OM has been used in religion for many years, laboratories began exploring the effects of OM meditation on people, by examining various parameters using electroencephalography, neuroimaging, evoked potentials, and other techniques in the 1990s, which led to the growth of scientific research with identifiable physical measures (Hiwale & Harne, 2019). Harne & Hiwale (2018) investigated the EEG spectrum analysis of OM meditation. After 30 minutes of OM meditation, they observed a considerable rise in theta power. This denotes a decrease in cortical alertness and anxiety during the relaxed state of meditation.

Chanting "OM" causes a vibrating feeling in the ears that travels along the vagus nerve's auricular branch, activating the vagal centers and having a similar effect in vagal stimulation therapy. Chanting the 'OM' produces neuro hemodynamic correlations that point to limbic inactivation. The study results support a possible use for the 'OM' chanting in clinical practice because comparable observations have been made with the vagus nerve stimulation therapy used to treat depression and epilepsy (Gangadhar et al., 2011).

Some research indicated yoga techniques may be employed as psychophysiologic stimuli to boost melatonin release from the body, which may be the cause of an enhanced sensation of wellbeing. Cardiorespiratory function and psychologic profile both improved after 3 months of yogic practises(Harinath et al., 2004).

Gurjar et al., (2009) studied the sound "OM" and its neurological impact and author found out that the OM mantra causes the brain to stabilise, worldly ideas to go, and energy to rise. It indicates that repeating the OM mantra while focusing on it causes a gradual shift in our attention. The OM mantra is a brain stabiliser and an energy medication for stressed-out people since it allows one to enter their natural state more deeply with practise. Within minutes, your body and mind start to relax. Negative ideas are drastically swept away to release this internal life force, which gives you greater energy, stamina, and focus while also healing your body on a cellular level.

Sachdev & Sittiprapaporn (2020) studied the impact of Om chanting on people's brain waves. The exposed subjects showed statistically significant increases in delta and theta brainwaves at 0.05 after hearing Om chanting. According to this study, individuals received training while listening to Om chanting, which most likely reduced their stress levels. While listening to Om chanting, there was an increase in delta and theta brainwaves.

Zhang et al. (2022) investigated that while chanting, how the behavioral and ERP reactions to unpleasant and neutral visuals changed. The result showed that OM chanting had an impact on controlling emotional reactions, as seen by lower evaluations of unpleasantness and arousal for the unpleasant stimuli under OM chanting conditions.

The OM mantra, which is made up of the letters A, U, and M and encompasses the entire articulation process, has been shown to boost parasympathetic nervous system activity (high HF power), encouraging serenity and relaxation. Lower HF power has been linked in the literature to stress, panic, anxiety or nervousness. Years of regular yoga practice are linked to improved peacefulness and relaxation (Inbaraj et al., 2022). Chanting the mantra "OM" slowly improves the synchronization of the heartbeat, systolic blood pressure and breathing cycles (Hotho et al., 2022).

Chanting OM improves states of relaxation that are favorable to enhanced mental and physical health by reducing anxiety and depression (Hiwale & Harne, 2019). It has been discovered that regularly repeating the AUM mantra restores the body's equilibrium on all levels—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Additionally, it creates a link with the divine energy that will help people become more intuitive, creative, have more energy and perform better at work. It improves mental clarity, self-awareness, capacity to interact with the outside world, willingness to serve others and openness to good thoughts. At the same time, bad thoughts are washed away, which heals the body at the cellular level and gives the person more energy, power and concentration (Dwivedi & Singh, 2016)

Depression, anxiety, stress and MMSE scores from before the intervention were not significantly different across the groups, nor were blood pressure and pulse rate. However, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, pulse rate, sadness, anxiety and stress were significantly reduced after six months of chanting Om. The MMSE scores significantly improved after om chanting (Amin et al., 2016). Compared to Pran Dharana, Om Chanting was the most effective method for lowering college students' anxiety levels (Singh, 2012).

Many young adults experience anxiety disorders, which are the most prevalent psychiatric illnesses. Chanting the Om Mantra can be a very effective yogic technique for the healing of anxiety. One research showed that repeating the Om mantra for 20 -30 min can significantly lower young people's anxiety levels(Verma et al., 2022).

As a supplement to medical treatment, OM chanting has been effective in reducing biochemical markers (Menariya et al., 2021). Some research indicated that there is a significant improvement in emotional intelligence after omkar meditation (Himani Anand & Ira Das, 2016). (Surlya, 2021) research results support

the hypothesis that there is a considerable difference in students' levels of stress when studying and when reciting the Om Mantra during exams.

Research on OM chanting's therapeutic benefits on psychosomatic diseases in women (30 to 50 years of age) was undertaken. (Surlya, 2021) assessed the impact of the OM mantra and the Anulom Vilom pranayama on medical and paramedical students. Improved lung functioning was observed as a result of practicing complete yoga-based breathing techniques.

Adlakha et al. (2023) investigated the effects of OM chanting on cardiovascular system, heart rate variability and on relieving stress. After making the individuals listen to OM chanting for 20 minutes, their blood pressure and pulse rates were measured. The outcome revealed a considerable reduction in blood pressure and heart rate as well as an increase in overall power.

Regular OM chanting is effective in treating a variety of conditions, including depression, anxiety, stress, psychiatric disorders, psychosomatic disorders, hypothyroidism and many more. It also helps to improve cognition, social cohesion, memory, lung function and many other things (Rajput & Girase, 2022). In one study after practicing OM chanting for 4 weeks, anxiety levels in the intervention group significantly decreased (Rankhambe & Pande, 2020).

By concentrating on stress reduction, enhanced good mood, decreased negative mood, and social connection, Simpson et al., (2021) research sought to determine if chanting might be a useful online tool to promote psychological and social wellness. In comparison to the online control task, online chanting produced a sizable decrease in stress and an increase in pleased affect. Furthermore, compared to individuals in the control group, people who participated in group chanting reported feeling closer to their fellow chanters. Although there were differences in the environment, individuals generally felt linked to one another. Whether done alone or in a group, the study's findings support the idea that online chanting might be a beneficial psychological intervention.

Kukade & S K (2022) studied yoga-based intervention's effects on the psychological well-being of female homeopathic medical students. The author found that the students who got the intervention showed noticeably bigger improvements in their levels of happiness, psychological wellness, mindfulness and spiritual health. One research has shown that students' memories significantly improved by OM chanting. Hence, it can be inferred that a yoga regimen that includes nadishodhana Pranayama and Om chanting significantly improved students' memories (Joshi, 2012).

Gahlawat (2017) studied the impact of yoga techniques on the incidence of suicidal thoughts among depressed pupils. The yogic practices included Kapalbhati, Anulom-vilom, Ujjayi pranayam and Omkar recitation wih Surya Namaskar and Shavasan as relaxation technique. According to the research result, yoga practises help pupils develop a good outlook on life and yoga practices had a beneficial impact on decreasing the prevalence of suicide thoughts among depressed pupils.

One research (Rajagopalan et al., 2022) showed a significant reduction in anxiety, stress and depression after a 14-day intervention. Additionally, following the 14 days of OM chanting, the patients' overall sleep and quality of life both improved. Gupta & Shokhand (2021) research showed Ujjayi pranayama which includes Om chanting helps to improve respiratory functions and lowers BMI, lipid indices, depression, TSH, T3, and T4 levels. Arora & Dubey (2018) examined the immediate effects of five minutes of Om chanting on heart rate and blood pressure in mildly hypertensive uncomplicated patients. After just five minutes of chanting Om, there was an instantaneous and substantial drop in blood pressure of 14/05 mmHg and six beats per minute.

OM chanting may be helpful to avoid airflow restriction. Additionally, the fact that a significant weight loss was seen along with these results, suggests that pranayama practice daily may help reduce obesity, which is linked to several systemic disorders, including cancer, coronary heart disease and even hypertension. In healthy people, OM chanting is beneficial for enhancing lung function (Mooventhan & Khode, 2014).

Researchers discovered that the insula, anterior cingulate and orbitofrontal cortices all dramatically decreased their outputs under the OM condition. The lowering of outputs to the limbic area amygdala from these locations is intriguing. The idea of using OM chanting in the treatment of MDD is raised by the modulation of brain areas associated with emotion processing and implicated in the condition(Rao et al., 2018).

Rajagopalan et al. (2022) studied the benefits of Om chanting and Yoga Nidra in lowering stress, anxiety and depression, as well as enhancing sleep quality and autonomic functions in hypertension patients. These interventions might be viewed as a less dangerous kind of supplementary therapy for treating hypertension and stress. (Anjana et al., 2022) a study showed how OM chanting and Yoga Nidra can help HTN patients lower their blood pressure and improve their lipid profiles.

In one research for the sound OM, wavelet transforms were used in the time-frequency analysis. According to this research, reciting the OM promotes mental stability. The anxious mind receives peace as a result. A person's mental tension decreases as their thinking becomes more stable. Last but not least, OM chanting success in lowering stress levels in people's minds has been verified empirically in this research (Gurjar & Ladhake, 2008).

Naidu et al. (2014) studied OM chanting impact on school-going children. When compared to the control group, the intervention group showed a significant improvement in both verbal and spatial memory. The positive impact of 30 minutes of OM chanting on memory is further supported by this study. For greater intellect and a higher quality of life, the author suggests OM chanting into daily activities. C et al. (2021) studied to add to the growing body of research supporting the positive benefits of Om chanting on stress and cognitive abilities in young adults with type D personalities. The author found out that compared to the control group, there was a clear improvement in the levels of the participants' verbal and spatial memory scores in the intervention group. When compared to the control group, the intervention group members' stress ratings significantly decreased. Venkatasamy et al. (2020) research indicated that young adults with anxiety can benefit from practicing Om meditation because it is non-invasive and inexpensive.

Impact of Omkar

- Om chanting can increase theta (wave) waves in the cerebral cortex, which benefits learning, memory, spatial navigation, and other functions. Reciting the Om improves working memory and mindfulness. Through the vagus nerve's auricular branches, OM chanting activates the brain's cognitive function. Additionally, OM chanting may be a sign of limbic inactivation. This increases mental alertness, which in turn improves awareness and focus.
- One research has shown that students' memory significantly improved by OM chanting. Om chanting can be helpful in memory enhancement and in increasing the concentration of school and college students. Some researchers have showed that these days students face academic problems, because of poor memory issues and low concentration.
- Om chanting can be useful in hypertension patients. Elevated blood pressure (BP) is a distinct risk factor for all causes of morbidity and death. Hypertension (HTN) is a serious public health problem.
- The study's results support the notion that online chanting could be a helpful psychological remedy, whether it is practiced alone or in a group.
- Om chanting can help to reduce psychosomatic diseases in women.
- Om chanting can be further useful in regulating hypothyroidism, hypertension, obesity, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, epilepsy, and respiratory tract diseases.
- Om chanting can reduce suicidal ideation because many researchers have done work on depression and Om chanting which showed that it decrease depression symptoms and depression is also predictor of suicidal ideation.
- Use of 'OM' chanting in clinical practice because comparable observations have been made with the vagus nerve stimulation therapy used to treat depression and epilepsy.

- Om chanting might be a useful online tool to promote psychological and social wellness.
- The OM mantra, which is made up of the letters A, U, and M and encompasses the entire articulation process, has been shown to boost parasympathetic nervous system activity (high HF power), encouraging serenity and relaxation. This will be useful for people who are working in stressful condition like high physical and mental work. This will be useful for people who suffering from insomnia and sleep disorder.
- The OM mantra is a brain stabilizer and an energy medication for stressed-out people since it allows one to enter their natural state more deeply with practice. And because of this it is very useful for people who do sports.
- Om meditation practice can be investigated as an inexpensive, non-invasive way to treat anxiety in young people. Because of this any individual can take advantage of this therapy just learning how to do. And this will be very useful for people who don't able to invest money in therapies .We can say it is natural medicine.

Conclusion

Chanting "OM" (AUM) is a traditional method that can help with many issues, including depression, anxiety, stress, psychiatric disorders, psychosomatic disorders, hypothyroidism, and many others. It can also improve memory, social cohesion, cognitive function, lung health, and many other things.

Benefit of OM mental chanting, which can increase motivation, alertness, attention arousal, and self alertness. The EEG spectrum analysis of OM meditation and observed a rise in theta power after 30 minutes, suggesting a decrease in cortical alertness and anxiety. In some research it shows that impact of Om chanting on people's brain waves and found statistically significant increases in delta and theta brainwaves at 0.05 after hearing Om chanting. Chanting "OM" causes a vibrating feeling in the ears that travels along the vagus nerve's auricular branch, activating the vagal centers and having a similar effect in vagal stimulation therapy. These results support a possible use for the 'OM' chanting in clinical practice.

Above researches indicates that Om chanting can be employed as psychophysiologic stimuli to boost melatonin release from the body, which may be the cause of an enhanced sense of wellbeing. Om chanting is a brain stabiliser and an energy medication for stressed-out people since it allows one to enter their natural state more deeply with practise. Chanting the mantra "OM" slowly improves the synchronization of the heartbeat, systolic blood pressure and breathing cycles, improving states of relaxation that are favorable to enhanced mental and physical health by reducing anxiety and depression.

Additionally, it creates a link with the divine energy that will help people become more intuitive, creative, have more energy and perform better at work. Repeating the Om Mantra can be a very effective method for lowering college students' anxiety levels. The effects of OM chanting on cardiovascular system, heart rate variability and relieving stress. Regular OM chanting is effective in treating a variety of conditions which needed medicine but Om chanting is free and nature medicine.

Online chanting produced a significant decrease in stress and an increase in positive affect. Omkar based interventions have also been found to improve psychological well-being and memory. Impact of yoga techniques including Omkar meditation on the incidence of suicidal thoughts among depressed pupils, finding suggest that Omkar practises help pupils develop a good outlook on life and have a beneficial impact on decreasing the prevalence of suicide thoughts. As we studied many researches which showed that Om chanting can reduced the depression symptoms, so we can say that it also decrease suicidal ideation because depression is predictor of suicidal ideation. Om chanting can also improve respiratory functions, lower BMI, lipid indices, TSH, T3, and T4 levels, and improve sleep quality and autonomic functions. It is also beneficial for enhancing lung function and lowering stress levels in hypertension patients.

Researches have also shown that OM chanting promotes mental stability and decreases stress levels in people's minds. OM chanting increases verbal and spatial memory of school going students and some research indicate that positive benefits of Om chanting on stress and cognitive abilities in young adults.

In conclusion, this review paper has made an effort to summarise the psycho-physiological and cognitive impacts of Om chanting based on the empirical research that has been conducted so far. According to the research mentioned above, the Om chanting has a positive impact on improving mental health and quality of life while reducing stress, anxiety, depression and anger. The investigations also showed an improvement in attention, impulsivity, and memory, as well as a beneficial effect on the cardiovascular, autonomic, and central neurological systems as measured by the fIRM, EEG, GSR, heart rate, and blood pressure.

Based on above researches we can say that Om chanting is very useful tool for students, bus driver, women, and patients who suffering from other illnesses. The current study adds to the body of data supporting the positive effects of Om chanting. We recommend further detailed studies in this area to understand impact of Om chanting on other diseases. Further studies are required in order to confirm the preliminary findings that Om chanting can use as medicine for clinical patient.

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