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A REVIEW ON THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS OF YOGA NIDRA

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ABSTRACT

Yoga nidra is a systematic way of yogic relaxation mentioned in our classics, later developed by Bihar School of Yoga. Physical, mental and spiritual relaxation can be attained through the conscious and regular practice of yoga nidra. The one-hour practice can help in reducing stress and improve the mental health and well-being of all age people. On comparison with other meditation techniques, Yoga nidra is more effective and research studies suggest that even though meditation and yoga nidra were both effective in lessening anxiety and stress, the results of yoga nidra was more remarkable. Research studies also suggest that yoganidra can be used in reducing the physiological and cognitive symptoms of anxiety. The effect of yoga nidra in various diseases have been proved through many clinical studies which are described in the review.

Keywords: Yoganidra, Yogic sleep, well-being, insomnia, mental health, relaxation

1. INTRODUCTION

The challenging and busy life style in the modern world has made everyone to adapt to the changing scenario in our own ways. During this struggle for changing, a state of negative stress or depression may develop in our inner self which further progress to mental disorders. Various ways of meditation can be employed

as a panacea for curing the psycho somatic disorders. Yoga nidra is one of the oldest techniques of meditation, otherwise called as yogic sleep, conscious sleep, sleepless sleep, dynamic sleep, deep relaxation, or psychic sleep with its origin in tantric philosophy and later it was developed into its current form by

Bihar School of Yoga. A complete mental, emotional and physical relaxation can be brought about through a systematic practice of yoga nidra. Even though the practitioner seems to be unconscious during the practise of yoga nidra, but his/her consciousness may function at a deeper level of awareness. It also produces mutual stimulation by inducing alpha brainwave in both brain hemispheres and altering consciousness states. It has also been shown that it is the safest means of inducing human beings to change their state of consciousness. Therefore, for the treatment of psychosomatic disease, it is a panacea or Ram ban. The practice of Yoga nidra can bring about many changes in diseases with a high psychosomatic component such as asthma, peptic ulcer and migraine headache etc. Considering the wide benefits and therapeutic effects, the objective of the current review was to summarize pieces of evidence from authentic studies on the therapeutic effects of yoga nidra.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS / EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS / METHODOLOGY

To acknowledge the therapeutic importance of yoganidra we performed a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles published in PubMed (2009 to 2021), Scopus and Ayush Portal. We used keywords like yoga nidra, yogic sleep and deep relaxation combined with terms such as insomnia, asthma, sports medicine, mental

wellbeing, and mental health for the search. When the search was carried using yoganidra (Title/Abstract) 16 results were obtained and 12 results were obtained on yogic sleep (Title and Abstract). Articles available on 'yoga nidra and mental health' were 181 and 'yoga nidra and mental wellbeing' were 42. 27 results were obtained in 'yoga nidra and sports medicine' and 16 results in 'yoga nidra and menstruation'. Authentic text books and relevant websites were also referred.

3. YOGANIDRA:

In psychology, the state attained in yoga nidra can be equated to the hypnogogic state i.e, the state between sleep and wakefulness (1). Yoga nidra comes from the ancient Tantric practice called nyasa. It was Swami Satyananda Saraswati (1998) who, in the 1960s, systematically and scientifically adapted and introduced the practise of yoga nidra. Yoga nidra is called yogic sleep, conscious sleep, sleepless sleep, dynamic sleep, deep relaxation, or psychic sleep. It can be defined as a changed state of consciousness as well.

As per Maharshi Markandeya, Yoga nidra is the state of deep relaxation and Lord Vishnu himself uses this marvelous technique. According to his visualizations, Maharshi Markandeya states in his book, Markandey Purana that Lord Vishnu was lying on the bed of a serpent in the state of yoga nidra at the end of Kalpa, when the entire universe was in deep relaxation.

Utpanneti Tada Loke Sanityapybhidhiyate/
Yoganidram Yada Vishnurjagatyekarnavikrite//
Swatmarama describes Yoga nidra as the state of turiya; it means the 'fourth dimension' that is all vast and encompassing, in which Shakti neither contracts nor extends, but is in union with Shiva or supreme consciousness.

Abhyaset Khecharim Tavadyavat
Syadyoganidritah/

Sampratyoganidrasya Kalo Nasti Kadachana//
Khechari should be practiced until yogic sleep occurs. Time becomes non-existent for one who has mastered yogic sleep. The word yoga nidra has been used here as the state of samadhi. The condition in which the conscious mind subsides, however consciousness persists, is Yogic sleep or yoga nidra (2).

4. THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS:

Yoganidra is used as a systemic method of maintaining equilibrium and well-being to alleviate tension, solve personal and interpersonal issues, solve trauma, and neutralize and resolve anxiety, fear, anger and depression (3). Through the practice of yoga nidra, which in turn releases the accumulated muscular stresses, the muscular stress arising from nervous and endocrine imbalances manifesting in the form of stiffness and rigidity in the physical body can be gradually relieved. When people struggle to communicate their feelings freely and openly in everyday life, emotions are repressed and expressed in the form of emotional tension. The practitioner

slowly shifts into the deeper realms of the mind during the practise of yoga nidra, where he or she experiences deep-rooted emotional tensions. When the practitioner, with full awareness and a witnessing attitude, recognises these emotional tensions, repressed emotions are released and the practitioner becomes calm and calm. The mind still persists in a state of arousal due to repetitive activity on the mental stage, resulting in mental tension. The Yoga nidra practice involves steps such as rotation of consciousness and breath awareness which completely relaxes the mind and releases the mental tension. The regular and sincere practice of yoga nidra helps in reducing the pressures at the physical, emotional and mental level (4). Yoga nidra helps to clear up the unconscious and awakens the creativity. By the systematic practice of yoganidra, mental health and general wellbeing are well maintained. It has a positive effect on cognitive faculties like memory, concentration, learning abilities and is beneficial in reducing psychological disorders and psychosomatic illnesses.

4.1 Role of Yoganidra in mental health and general wellbeing:

The impact of Yoga nidra and seated meditation on the mental health of college professors at the Federal University of Sergipe was assessed. Three interventional groups of Yoga Nidra, seated meditation, and control group consisting of 60 college professors of

both genders aged between 30 and 55 years were randomly allocated.

- Group 1 – 20 participants attended weekly seated meditation sessions
- Group 2 – 20 participants attended weekly relaxation (Yoga Nidra) sessions
- Group 3 – 20 participants participated as the control group (waiting list).

The evaluation was taken twice during the three months duration and psychological variables such as anxiety, stress, and depression were evaluated in pre- and post-test. The following psychometric tools have been used: The Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI); Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A); Body Sensations Questionnaire (BSQ); and Stress Symptoms Inventory for Adults Lipp (ISSL).

In the present investigation, data analysis showed that the Group 2 showed good results in the following variables: BAI, BSQ, and HAM-A (anxiety). Meditation group presented better results only in the BSQ variable. Pre-post results indicate that the relaxation group might represent a better intervention in reducing the anxiety levels although both interventions were effective when compared to the control group. The yoganidra intervention group showed more effectiveness. The study effectively showed the reduction in anxiety and stress levels of college professors in Yoga Nidra and seated meditation. Yoganidra is easy

to perform and doesn't require a seated posture and concentration and it positively impact psychological variables, such as anxiety and depression (5).

Andrea Lukacs *et al* conducted a study on the general well-being of young people who were full-time students of the University of Miskolc, Hungary after practising yoga nidra for three months. 48 females and 19 males attended a 14 week long course where they practised yoga nidra under a yoga teacher for 20-25 minutes per week. Age-matched (20.02 ± 0.54) control group including 51 females and 24 males were randomly chosen the two groups were assessed pre and post with the 13-item Beck Depression Scale. SPSS 19.0 software was used and the level of significance was set at p value ≤ 0.05 . Significant differences were noted after 14 weeks of practice (yoga nidra group 2.43 ± 2.20 vs. control group 4.56 ± 3.89 ; $p=0.001$).

There was significant improvement in yoga nidra group between the first and second measures (at baseline 4.27 ± 3.51 vs. 14 weeks later 2.43 ± 2.20 ; $p=0.000$). There were no observed significant differences between the two measures in the control group. Comparing the items between the two measures, significant improvement in mood ($p=0.019$), self-dissatisfaction ($p=0.012$), guilt ($p=0.003$), punishment ($p=0.033$), body image ($p=0.016$), work difficulties ($p=0.001$) and fatigue ($p=0.000$) was observed. The findings of the study suggest that practising yoga nidra

improves the students' general wellbeing. Students encountered short- and long-term effects and thus they were encouraged to continue yoganidra practice throughout the lifetime. It is a simple and easy to practice method to improve general wellbeing in young people (6).

4.2 Role of Yoganidra in psychosomatic illness:

Yoga nidra aims to release from the unconscious the suppressed and repressed conflicts, thus relaxing the mind. The illness could also be cured when the potent cause (tense mind) of psychosomatic disorders is managed. The practise of various phases of yoga nidra, such as sankalpa, muscle relaxation, awareness of breath and guided imagery, has been found to be an important and effective method of asthmatic therapy (Erskine & Schonell, 1981). Gupta *et al.* (1979) found out that after constant training in yoga nidra, 18 out of 27 asthmatic patients, showed improvement in respiratory function and 63 percent had relaxation and dilation of the bronchial tubes when tested on a spirometer. Jansson (1979) reported that the symptoms of colonic irritability diminished significantly after three weeks of relaxation training. In the case of cardiac patients, Cooper (1979) reported that serum cholesterol levels in cardiac patients were significantly reduced by yoga nidra.

The effect of yoganidra on blood glucose level in diabetic patients was studied in the Department of Physiology, S.S. Medical College, Rewa (MP). In Department of Physiology, S.S. Medical College, Rewa (MP), another research study was performed to evaluate the effect of Yoga-Nidra on blood glucose level in diabetic patients. 41 middle aged type-2 diabetic patients who were on oral hypoglycaemic were selected for this study and were asked about the symptoms related to diabetes mellitus. Detailed information was collected on pre-designed proforma; complete general, anthropometries and systemic examination were carried out. The exclude patients were with the values such as >200 mg/dl fasting, or >300 mg/dl Post meal blood glucose level, history of diabetic complications or other systemic diseases. There were two groups wherein the experimental group of 20 patients who are taking oral hypoglycaemic and regularly practising Yoganidra 45 minutes daily up to 90 days and a control group of 21 patients who took oral hypoglycaemic regular and not practicing yoga-nidra. Vital parameters and blood glucose level were examined after every 30th day. Blood glucose was measured in two phases fasting and postprandial (2 h after meal) by simple glucometer technique. The student's t-test was used for statistical analysis, a P-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

During the 3-month course of yoga-nidra, most of the symptoms reduced ($P < 0.004$, significant) and mean blood glucose level began to fall within 15 days and at the end of 3-months this fall was statistically significant in both fasting as well as Post Prandial (PP) blood glucose level. Fall in fasting Blood Glucose (BG) was 21.75 mg/dl, ($P < 0.007$, significant) and Post Prandial Blood Glucose (PP BG) was 17.95 mg/dl, ($P = 0.02$, significant). Yoga nidra as an inexpensive therapy was found very effective in regularizing the blood glucose level as well as counteracting the chronic psychological stress associated with undetected type-2 diabetes mellitus (7).

4.3 Role of Yoganidra in stress:

Shalini Lakshmi *et al* and Dr. Veena Easvaradoss *et al* conducted a study on the practice of yoga nidra meditation as an effective strategy for reducing the perceived stress and self-regulation of teacher trainees from two Colleges of Education in Chengalpattu and Chennai. The experimental and control group consists of 35 students with age range of 21 years to 23 years and all the students had completed graduation and are from middle class. The following psychological tests were used:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1988)

2. The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ; Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999).

The researcher conducted the pre testing of perceived stress scale and self-regulation

questionnaire for both experimental and control groups. The meditation session was conducted in the afternoon an hour after the participants had lunch. Yoga nidra training and practice was given for 1 hour 30 min on alternate days for 20 days in the months of February and March 2016. After 20 days, the post assessment of the two psychological tests were conducted. Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 20. After the statistical analysis, it was concluded that Yoga nidra meditation significantly reduced perceived stress in teacher trainees who underwent the intervention compared to a control group. There was a significant decrease in perceived stress in the intervention group following yoga nidra intervention (8).

In another experimental study conducted in M. M. College of Nursing, Mullana, Ambala to assess and compare the stress level of B.Sc nursing first year students before and after the administration of Yoga nidra, 50 samples were selected and their data was collected by using modified stress assessment scale. 5 levels were kept for assessing stress scores such as severe (57-80), high (47-56), moderate (37-46), low (27-36) and very low (0-26). The yoga nidra session was arranged at 4:00pm regularly for 20 days except on Sundays. On the beginning, the stress scores were obtained using modified stress assessment tool. The duration of each session of Yoga Nidra was 48 minutes. Stress scores were obtained on day 20th after the

administration of Yoga Nidra to evaluate the effectiveness of Yoga Nidra Data collected was

analyzed in SPSS – 16 version.

The table shows the number of students with stress before and after the administration of Yoga nidra.

	Very low stress	Low stress	Moderate stress	High stress	Severe stress
Before Yoga nidra	23(46%)	17 (34%)	8(16%)	1(2%)	1(2%)
After Yoga nidra	42(82%)	4(8%)	2(4%)	1(2%)	1(2%)

There was no effect of Yoga Nidra on students having stress in the category of high stress level and severe stress level. The study findings suggest that the effect of Yoga Nidra on stress level of nursing students is positive revealing evidence for the effect of Yoga Nidra in reducing stress level of students. The mean stress score after Yoga Nidra (17.8) of nursing students was significant lesser than the mean stress score before Yoga Nidra (28.82) as per t test ($p < .05$). The students also reported that this Yoga Nidra was useful, that they felt relaxed, peaceful, and calm. The mean stress scores after Yoga Nidra were significantly lower than the stress scores before Yoga Nidra of post graduate students, as findings similar to present study (9).

4.4 Role of Yoganidra in psychological and physiological parameters:

Amit Punj. *et al* . did a study on the effects of Yoga nidra on psychological and physiological characteristics in children aged 9 to 13. A total of 150 students from rural background was included in the experimental group and a parallel group of 40 students of same backgrounds was taken in control group. Before starting the study, Yoga nidra training of one week was given to the experimental

group. The test group was advised to practise Yoga nidra for 30 minutes (in morning time) for five days in a week for 12 weeks. The control group was just asked to relax for 30 minutes and no other special technique was advised for them. Pre and post testing of anxiety, memory and Hb was done to assess the Yoga nidra. The Anxiety was assessed through Generalized Anxiety Scale for Children (SACS) developed by Dr. Anil kumar, National Psychological Corporation, Agra. 20 Word Recall Memory test technique originally developed by Schmitt, Jorrisen, Sobczok, Boxtel, Deutz and Riedel (1998) used to assess Memory level. Hb was measured by standardized techniques. After completion of three months study period, the pre and post score of all parameters i.e, Anxiety, Memory and Hb were statistically analyzed. The Mean and Standard Deviation, Standard Error, —t-test and F test were calculated. The obtained t-test value was compared with the tabulated significant value at 0.05 level of confidence with 95 degree of freedom. On the basis of interpretation of the Means, SDs, Standard Error and mean differentials (t-value) between pre-test scores and post-test scores on control and experimental condition, it can be

concluded that Yog Nidra has a positive impact on generalized anxiety Level. The subjects with low anxiety level or the careless subjects became conscious towards their goal. Similarly, the subjects with higher anxiety level became relaxed and more focused towards their goal. Yoga Nidra has the positive impact on Memorization process of early adolescent students. Yog Nidra and Relaxation both may be helpful in increasing the Hemoglobin (Hb) of human being but comparison of mean values of both Control and experimental groups indicates the same. Hb levels increased from 11.305 to 11.425 in the control group, and from 11.35 to 11.68 in the experimental group (increment of 0.33). The t-value 20136 is significant, in experimental group, also confirms that Yoga nidra had the positive impact in maintaining the Hb level of subjects. It can be concluded that Yoga nidra has positive impact on anxiety, memory and Hb (10).

4.5 Role of Yoganidra in rheumatoid arthritis:

The study included 20 rheumatoid arthritis patients from the Ayurvedic & Yoga Research Institute in Motihari, Bihar. After diagnosis through physical examination modern as well as Ayurvedic Clinical Methodology, each patient was subjected to the following practice for 4 weeks- Pawan muktasana Part I (Anti rheumatic group), Nadi Sodhan Pranayam (Psychic network Purification), Yoganidra. The

patients showed significant clinical relief in pain, tenderness, stiffness and swelling of the joint and also reported with the feeling of wellbeing, lightness in the body, improvement in mental tension, muscular tension & emotional tension. The overall result in the cases were categorised and in final analysis 40% cases got relieved, 10% case got improvement (+) 20% case got improve (++) another 20% got improving (++++) and 10% case remained incompletely assessed. The practice of Yoganidra on daily basis may have analgesic and anti-inflammatory effect to control pain (11).

4.6 Role of Yoganidra in menstrual irregularities:

150 female patients more than 18 years of age having menstrual irregularities, (pathological amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, polymenorrhea, hypomenorrhea, menorrhagia and metrorrhagia) from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, CSM Medical University (erstwhile KGMU) Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India were randomly divided in to two groups 1- Intervention group: 75 subjects (Yoga Nidra intervention and medication) 2- control group: 75 subjects (without Yoga Nidra intervention only medication). The results suggest that the somatoform symptoms measured in this study improved in yoga nidra performers group. The participants in the intervention group started feeling better and were relieved from somatoform symptoms as

then compared with the Control group. Yoga Nidra may be a method for improving headache, giddiness, nervousness and irritability in patients with menstrual irregularities (12).

4.7 Role of Yoganidra in cancer:

Yoga nidra can be adopted as a therapeutic model in the treatment of cancer as a method of meditation. Yoga nidra is used at four different levels in cancer therapy:

1) By releasing repressed matter: Cancer research has shown that the subconscious and unconscious mind's repressed and suppressed material reinforces the multiplication of anarchic tumour cells, resulting in cancer. In yoga nidra, in a real sense, cancer patients are taught to relax. Patients practise the visualisation technique in the state of complete relaxation, which helps to bring up the repressed unconscious matter in the present area of awareness. When these repressions are observed with a witnessing attitude, the identity of the ego is cut off and there is no further repression or suppression. In this way, the strengthening factor of cancer is slowly being rooted out.

2) By Pranic Healing: The subtle bioplasmic energy, prana, is awakened and mobilised throughout the body in the practise of yoga nidra. The practitioner is required to consciously imagine the flow of light or energy within the infected area of the body being healed. This conscious imagination slowly

activates the dormant capacity for self-healing and actual healing takes place in the patient. Pranic healing is called this kind of healing.

3) By mental healing: Through the technique of visualisation, healing can also be initiated on the mental plane in yoga nidra. The cancer is visualised here, shrinking in size; fighting the cancer cells is visualised by an army of white blood cells. This results in the activation of the dormant mental power to heal the infected part, i.e. the power of the unconscious. When the body is again and again visualised to be in perfect health, the inherent potency of the mind actually begins to heal the cancer.

4) By promoting willpower: Patients are devoid of hope in most cases of cancer and give up the fight against the disease, which further aggravates the situation. In yoga nidra, sankalpa is practised for this purpose. The sankalpa helps the patient build up willpower and optimism because it is sown again and again in the subconscious and unconscious mind.

Yoganidra cures carcinoma through cultivating trust, willpower, and optimism, as well as releasing unconscious suppression and healing the cancer site on a pranic and mental level. This fact was supported by the Simonton study (1972), which found in controlled trials that the life span of cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy was significantly increased by a specific form of yoga nidra. Similarly, Meares (1979) showed clear rectum cancer regression following meditation. Meares (1980) found out

that meditation helps in the recovery of metastatic (secondary) cancers that developed from primary lung cancer (13).

4.8 Role of Yoganidra in insomnia:

A comparative study was conducted at Bharti Vidyapeeth, Pune to find out the effect of combined effect of shiroabhyanga and yoganidra in the management of Nidranash with special reference to primary Insomnia. Patients were divided in 3 groups named Group A, Group B, Group C with 10 patients each.

Group A - 10 Patients were given Shiro abhyanga

Group B - 10 Patients were given Yoga nidra

Group C - 10 Patients were Shiro abhyanga along with Yoga nidra

The status of sleep was assessed with a pre-structured questionnaire before the beginning of the study. The patients of group A and C were given Shiro abhyanga for 10-15 minutes for 21 days. Group Band Group C were given Yoga nidra practice for 30minutes for 21 days. After the 21 days treatment, the post test was conducted and follow up was taken after 60 days. The data was analyzed in SPSS version 20 and the statistical significance of each group was calculated.

There was no statistically significant difference in the improvement on body ache in group A and group B. Similarly effect of Group B was same as effect of Group C on body ache. But there was statistically significant difference in improvement on body ache in group A and

group C i.e. effect of Group A was not same as effect of Group C on body ache. There was no statistically significant difference in improvement on Sense after awakening in group A and group B also in group B and group C i.e. effect of Group A was same as effect of Group B on Sense after awakening. Similarly effect of Group B was same as effect of Group C on Sense after awakening, but there was statistically significant difference in improvement on Sense after awakening in group A and group C i.e. effect of Group A was not same as effect of Group C on sense after awakening. The statistical observation showed that the Shiroabhyanga and Yoganidra for the management of Nidranash (primary insomnia) is effective. After a careful theoretical and clinical study following conclusions were drawn from the research.

1. Group A is significantly effective on Nidranasha (primary insomnia).
2. Group B is significantly effective on Nidranasha (primary insomnia).
3. Group C is highly significantly effective on Nidranasha (primary insomnia) (14).

5. DISCUSSION

Yoganidra is an unique and safest means of inducing human beings to change their state of consciousness. The widespread benefits of yoganidra nad the studies that are published in various research sites were enumerated above. The influence of yoganidra on the mental health and wellbeing occure mainly due to the

sankalpa phase and the period of relaxation enjoyed during the practice. Something in life can disappoint you, but not the sankalpa made during yoga nidra,"Anything in life can fail you, but not the sankalpa made during yoga nidra" In the subconscious mind, when it is calm and receptive, the sankalpa is taken and sown. The subconscious mind is rather obedient and thus automatically follows out the instructions. The sankalpa teaches the subconscious mind in Yoganidra, and then the ordinary mind immediately follows the direction. The sankalpa helps to prepare the mind and, when the mind is calm and able to learn and embrace it, it is planted. The important thing is that with good willpower and feeling, the resolve should be planted. Often individuals make intellect-driven intentional resolutions, which seldom bring outcomes.

Yoganidra not only causes bodily stimulation as the consciousness is rotated on the various body parts, but also clears the nerve pathways to the brain. In the cortical white matter of the brain, the series of rotation of consciousness in yoga nidra is in line with the map. It produces a flow of pranic energy inside the neural circuit of the brain's motor homunculus as the perception is rotated again and again in the same sequence. A subjective perception of calm in the brain gives this pranic flood. A pair of opposing emotions or impulses in the

practitioner are intensified again and again in one of the processes of yoga nidra.

This constant invoking of opposing impulses or stimuli is compatible with the brain's electrophysiological working principles. It generates a nerve impulse as a neuron shoot, which is relayed and recorded in the brain. But if the same neuron continues firing over and over again, then the brain no longer registers the relayed impulse. This 'phenomenon habituation' has been dubbed by researchers. As the brain gets used to the stimulus, it eventually becomes calm. Mental relaxation is the condition when the brain is fully calm.

Creativity is a characteristic feature of a mind that is relaxed and calm. The awareness slowly enters the deeper realms of the mind (subconscious and unconscious) when the mind is completely relaxed, and the person becomes aware of the creative and intuitive faculties. Regular yoga nidra practice helps to create a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind. Slowly, one gets attuned to the unconscious operations and then the power of creativity awakens automatically.

The yoga nidra technique can be used as an educational tool for children with slow learning, where knowledge is transferred directly into the subconscious mind. The yoga nidra method is helpful in increasing the capacity for learning and memory. Both hemispheres of the student's brain are engaged in learning the subject when yoga nidra is used

in the classroom, while the left hemisphere is more involved in classroom teaching.

The sympathetic nervous system is activated during stress because the organism adopts the 'fight or flight' mechanism. In normal conditions, after the emergency passes, the parasympathetic system takes over. But the sympathetic system has mostly been seen to remain active most of the time, resulting in the experience of distress (Selye, 1974). An attempt is made to activate the parasympathetic system in yoga nidra, and a balance is slowly achieved between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems by inducing full physical, emotional and mental relaxation. The practice of Yoga Nidra counteracts stress in this way. Carrington *et al* (1980) concluded that yoga nidra has its most widespread use as a preventive measure for healthy, active individuals to practise as a means of alleviating accumulated tensions, increasing resistance to stress and overall efficiency, and preventing the development of diseases related to stress.

6. CONCLUSION

Swami Satyananda (1998) have rightly said that an hour of Yoga nidra gives an equivalent relaxation equivalent of four hours of conventional sleep. This review was done to bring to light the therapeutic efficacy of yoganidra but we found that only minimal studies were published in indexed journals like PubMed, Scopus and Ayush Portal. Lack of research and restricted yogic literary works

were the major lacunae. Apart from yoganidra, we searched into related studies like yogic relaxation, dynamic sleep etc. The practice of Yoga nidra and its benefits in various psychosomatic illness are undertaken for research studies in many medical colleges. But the practical applicability of yoga nidra in these disorders is still not explored. The yogic sleep practice can be initiated at schools, colleges, MNCs, sports centres, rehabilitation centres, geriatric homes etc. The better utilization of this dynamic sleep can procure good results in healthy as well as diseased patients. Researches support its efficacy in managing psychosomatic disorders and appears to be equally effective in children and adults. The simple cost-effective, non-pharmacological mode of treatment can reduce the use of antibiotics and other suppressants. Further studies are needed to prove the efficacy of this therapy and establish the same as a science-based, evidence-based practice.

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Competing Interests

None

Consent (Where Ever Applicable)

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