

Yoga in Stress Related Oral Disorders: On and off the Mat

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Abstract—*Oral cavity is directly or symbolically related to major human instincts and passions. Oral changes with psychosomatic etiology are still an insufficiently confirmed and investigated subgroup of psychosomatic diseases. In their daily practice dentists frequently come across patients showing signs of stress and their oral manifestations in form of Oral lichen planus, recurrent aphthous stomatitis, Erythema multiforme, mucous membrane pemphigoid, necrotizing gingivitis, burning mouth syndrome, temporo-mandibular disorders (TMD) and atypical facial pain.. Recognition of such psychological or emotional disturbance benefits both the patient and clinician.*

Yoga is an ancient science of mind-body co-ordination which has been in practice for thousands of years. Therapeutic yoga is defined as the application of yoga postures and practice to the treatment of various health conditions. Research has shown that Yoga is useful in relieving pain, anxiety and stress.

A review of existing literature reveals that practice of yoga and meditation is not widely researched for oral conditions. Significant gaps in the scientific knowledge base limit the accuracy with which dental professionals can guide their patients regarding yoga and meditation practice to treat stress related oral disorders. Though yoga and meditation are considered accepted therapeutic modalities for TMD, the existing literature does not show any clinical or biochemical trials that have tested the effects of yoga and meditation on TMD. The current management approach for stress related oral mucosal disorders is symptomatic therapy. Yoga and meditation by relieving stress and anxiety could decrease the number of episodes of these diseases and increase the symptom free period.

This paper reviews the concurrent literature regarding causal relationship between stress and oral disorders, gives an overview of the oral psychosomatic disorders and highlights evaluation and management of these patients with emphasis on yoga and meditation.