

Yoga as a Therapy for Lifestyle Disorders

Darshan Malik¹, Jayita Thakur² and Shashi Nihawan³

^{1,2,3}Department of Biochemistry, Shivaji College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

Abstract—Lifestyle diseases are characterized by those diseases whose occurrence is primarily based on the daily habits of people and occur as a result of an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. Diseases like diabetes, obesity, depression, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases etc. has been shown to have a major correlation with the life style of an individual. The main factors that contribute to the onset of lifestyle diseases are poor eating habits, physical inactivity, wrong body posture, and a disturbed biological clock. Their occurrence of have taken global epidemic proportions and need to be addressed urgently. In India alone, 10% of adults have been projected to suffer from hypertension while the country is home to 25-30 million diabetics. Three out of every 1,000 people suffer a stroke. It has also been shown that about 68% of working women in the age bracket of 21-52 years of age were found to be afflicted with lifestyle ailments such as chronic backache, diabetes, obesity, depression, and hypertension. There is enough scientific evidence that reinstates that a healthy diet and adequate physical activity can help prevent these diseases. Extensive studies have shown that Yoga is one of the most effective forms of physical activity for preventing as well as managing various disorders. Its efficacy has been well described in relieving chronic stress, anxiety, depression, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. The guided breathing techniques of Yoga as well as the various yogic postures play a role in modulating the body's nervous system as well as cardiovascular system. It is suggested that adopting a yoga/meditation-based lifestyle modification could reversal of markers of aging, mainly oxidative stress, telomerase activity, and oxidative DNA damage. This may not only delay aging and prolong a youthful healthy life but also delay or prevent onset of several lifestyle-related diseases, of which oxidative stress and inflammation are the chief cause. Thus, simple lifestyle interventions like Yoga may be therapeutic for oxidative DNA damage and oxidative stress and other lifestyle related diseases.

Keywords: Sedentary lifestyle, Lifestyle diseases, Stress, Anxiety, Diabetes, Yoga, Pranayama.