

Yoga life style for prevention of Cardiovascular Disease

Padma Shri Dr. S.C. Manchanda

Senior Consultant Cardiologist, Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi

email: doctormanchanda@yahoo.com



Dr. S.C. Manchanda, is a senior consultant at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, a prestigious hospital located in the West Central Delhi. He has an experience of over 36 years at All India Institute for Medical Sciences (AIIMS). Dr. Manchanda has been honoured by Padma Shri award by the President of India in 2004 for his contribution to field of medical sciences. Dr. Manchanda's contribution has been his research on reversal of Heart Disease by Yoga, Meditation, Diet and Exercise. Dr. Manchanda has written numerous articles and books on cardiology. He conducts Heart Reversal camps at Adhytma Sadhma Kendra at Mehrauli.

Yoga is mind body technique aimed at physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being. Yoga life style is a holistic lifestyle intervention consisting of high fibre vegetarian (satvik) diet, tobacco cessation and stress control (lifestyle polypill) and probably is the best lifestyle ever devised. Beneficial effects of yoga have been reported in allergies, asthma, anxiety, depression, acid peptic disease, irritable bowel disease, migraine, diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD). Yoga appears to be especially useful for primary and secondary prevention of CVD.

Numerous controlled and uncontrolled studies suggest that yoga can significantly control all the risk factors of coronary heart disease (CHD) like blood pressure, body wt, diabetes mellitus, lipid profile, psychological stress and smoking. The effect of yoga on blood pressure is consistent though modest and hence recently the scientific statement from American Heart Association recommends that meditation may be considered as a non pharmacological measure to control blood pressure. Yoga appears to be extremely useful in Metabolic Syndrome where it has been shown to improve insulin resistance, lipids, obesity, sugar and blood pressure. Our study has shown that yoga can reverse early atherosclerosis in metabolic syndrome as assessed by decrease in carotid intima medial thickness (CIMT).

Three randomised trials utilising coronary angiography have demonstrated that regular practice of yoga can retard the progression or even regress advanced coronary atherosclerotic stenosis as compared to the usual control group. In a recent randomised control trial of transcendental meditation (TM) in blacks, it has been reported that there was a 48% risk reduction in composite end point of all cause mortality, myocardial infarction and stroke over a period of 5.4 years. A few small studies also suggest that yoga is useful for prevention of atrial fibrillation and heart failure. Yoga may be a useful tool for cardiac rehabilitation because yoga leads to improved physical fitness, stress reduction and general well being. A large Indo UK study has been started to define the role of yoga in cardiac rehabilitation

Although there are several limitations of the reported studies of yoga and large multicentre randomised trials are required to confirm the findings, yoga being a simple cost effective technique without any side effects could be recommended for primary and secondary prevention of CVD and that it can play a primary or complimentary role in this regard.

