

health benefits

by Joyce Nyawira

Submission date: 29-Jun-2020 12:54PM (UTC-0700)

Submission ID: 1351466210

File name: The_Health_Benefits_of_Meditation.docx (21.35K)

Word count: 1568

Character count: 8857

The Benefits of Meditation

Student's Name:

Institutional Affiliation:

Introduction

Meditation refers to the practice where an individual practices an act of mindfulness or focusing the mind on a particular activity or objective – to train awareness and attention and achieve mental clarity on a particular issue. The meditation exercise is quite a common practice for people all over the world; more than 14% of adults across the United States have practiced meditation at least once, the number of children who have practiced meditation has doubled since 2012, and the number of people practicing meditation has more than tripled since 2012. Research shows that mindful meditation has been used for centuries across the world with the belief that it leads to enhanced memory (Heger, 2020). The topic of meditation is of interest as it represents an everyday therapeutic activity that can be done by people at no cost, at any time, and by anyone, and it features a plethora of psychological and ⁴physical health benefits.

Mental Health Benefits

The first mental health benefit of meditation is that it generally leads to happier lives. People who meditate enjoy the flow of positive emotions and constructive thoughts. Extensive studies conducted on a group of monks found out that the pre-frontal cortex which was associated with generating happiness was much larger than that of a normal person. A growing body of research shows that meditation can help manage stress, depression, and anxiety and hence has a transformative potential on people who do regular meditation. Studies done at the University of Wisconsin found out that the brain part that regulates anxiety and stress usually shrinks when meditation is done consistently. Meditation is associated with better concentration and focus since exercising routine meditation can lead to improved focus on other activities in daily life.

Mindful meditation can help improved self-awareness and self-esteem since it encourages one to slow down, and paves way for a deeper self-reflection that helps one discover some positive attributes about oneself. Brian Wind a clinical officer at the Journey Cure observes that mindfulness improves self-awareness by enabling one to examine their thoughts without judgments. Researchers at Stanford University have found out that meditation can help one deal with social anxiety. Another benefit of meditation is reduced stress levels; meditation is known to lower the cortisol levels which is the hormone associated with stress. In a 2013 review, the researchers examined over 200 studies of mindful meditation and found meditation as an effective way of reducing anxiety and stress (Davis, 2015). Repeating a mantra-like phrase or a word often known as transcendental meditation has a calming effect and altogether helps keep away from distracting thoughts.

Physical Health Benefits

Meditation often leads to relaxation and this promotes the production of nitric oxide in the brain region which reduces blood pressure. The Massachusetts General Hospital established that 64% of patients who exercised meditation for a period of three-months had a drop in their blood pressure; and this enabled them to reduce their prescribed medicines ⁶Fontana, D., Slack, I., & Fontana, D. (2007). Meditation is also associated with higher levels of brain plasticity, the brain's ability to change functionally and structurally according to the environmental stimuli. Meditation has been termed as more effective than medications like morphine primarily due to the ability to calm the somatosensory cortex of the brain. It also incites activities on other parts of the brain. Studies by the *Wake Forrest University* found that meditation reduced the unpleasantness of pain by 57% and reduce the intensity of pain by a whopping 40%. Participants who practiced meditation reported a higher level of pain tolerance than others.

The brain structure and functioning are not the only domains improved by consistent mindful meditation. A 2012 study found out that mindful meditation can improve heart health particularly due to the calmness achieved by consistent meditation. The study involved 201 coronary heart disease patients who were exposed to two sets of interventions against their diseases. The first category was exposed to meditation programs and the second was set on an improved exercise and diet. After a period of five years, it was established that those who had chosen to pursue meditation had an improved risk reduction in heart attack, stroke, and death by an improved 48%. Myriad studies on meditation published in reputable publications show that meditation has played an instrumental role in encouraging people to obtain from their addictions. As an addiction control mechanism, meditation often distracts the mind from a routine addictive pattern of behavior, either through mindful concentration or emotional detachment.

From a clinical perspective, researchers believe that ⁵ meditation balances the body systems. Studies by the ² WebMD reports that most Americans are not raised to sit and think, but meditation has attained ³ millions of converts by helping them ease anxiety, chronic pain, improve heart health, and ease stress. Most importantly is that meditation ability to attain a balance in metabolism and body systems has helped resolve pregnancy problems and boost immunity and moods. Cardiologist Herbert Benson notes that any disease or ³ condition that is caused or worsened by stress can be relieved and alleviated by meditation. The relaxation response that is attained by meditation lowers the blood pressure and reduces the metabolism levels and improved breathing and brain waves. Tightness and tension associated with many physical conditions are known to seep out of the muscles when the brain receives a relaxing massage. Myriad physical health benefits of meditation are associated with relaxation which leads to low blood pressure, reduces anxiety and stress, and leads to improved metabolism activity.

Application of Meditation

Ajahn Bramali a long-standing Buddhist of 11 years and presently a resident of the Buddhist Monastery of Western Australia states that the benefits of meditation are twofold. The first is the ordinary contribution of meditation like relieving stress, getting rid of depression, and becoming more relaxed (Fraser et al. 2013). More peace and relaxation lead to contentment and concentration and this enables people to become more focused and more efficient in their work. Eventually, the person becomes more socially adept due to internal harmony and a heightened sense of concentration. The second benefit of meditation is the spiritual side of it; which enables the person to attain insight into the soul, and they experience peace, joy, tranquillity, and happiness. Through meditation, people understand who they truly are and they gain a broader understanding of their spiritual sense and soul. Meditation also has clinical applications since it can be used as a calming therapy for stress and depression (Goleman & Davidson, 2018).

Meditation has a calming and relaxing effect which gives it an edge in managing and treating psychological conditions like depression, anxiety, and stress. The act of meditation stems from the pressing will to attain harmony through scrutiny and it aligns mental and physical tenets; mind, body, and soul. Mindful meditation has a special application in psychotherapy since more psychiatrists are incorporating meditation programs in the psychotherapy practice for quite a long time in treating and managing mental episodes of flashes. Besides depression, there is a growing consensus that meditation can be applied to manage a wide range of mental and psychological conditions. For instance, ¹there is a growing body of evidence that meditation is useful in preventing relapses particularly to people with chronic relapses in depression and anxiety.

Personal Evaluation

Based on the personal evaluation, meditation should be encouraged in young people who are undergoing different stages of growth and self-discovery. It should not be viewed as an optional practice to managing depression, and stress but as a crucial practice in managing psychological conditions and attaining an improved sense of self-discovery. The practice of meditation should also be incorporated as a psychotherapeutic practice by psychiatrists and viewed by institutions as central in treating and managing a growing set of psychological conditions. It is a personal belief that meditation presents a unique self-management technique that can be applied in the clinical domain to solve a growing number of conditions.

Conclusion

What was learned about meditation is that it represents the process of indulging in focused thoughts about a situation, object, or phenomenon? Meditation extends a calming and relaxing effect making it easier to deal with a wide range of psychological conditions like stress, anxiety, and depression (Fontana, Slack, & Fontana, 2007). The benefits of meditation are identified three-fold; physical, mental, and spiritual. The physical benefits of meditation include; improved sleep, reduced blood pressure, and improved cardiovascular and heart health. The mental benefits include reduced anxiety and stress, mental relaxation, and improved quality of sleep; and spiritual benefits include an improved insight of one's soul and spiritual self. Studies further support that meditation has a clinical application particularly in the psychiatric practice; the above analysis surmises the paper adding knowledge and creating insight on the health benefits of meditation.

References

- Davis, J. (2015). Meditation Balances the Body's Systems. The WebMD Official. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/transcendental-meditation#1>
- Fontana, D., Slack, I., & Fontana, D. (2007). *Teaching meditation to children: The practical guide to the use and benefits of meditation techniques*. London: Watkins.
- Fraser, A., Goleman, D., Kabat-Zinn, J., Rinpoché, S., Saron, C., & Overdrive Inc. (2013). *The Healing Power of Meditation*. Place of publication not identified: Shambhala.
- Goleman, D., & Davidson, R. J. (2018). *The science of meditation: How to change your brain, mind, and body*.
- Heger, E. (2020). 7 Benefits of Meditation, and how it can affect your Brain. The Insider Official. Retrieved from <https://www.insider.com/benefits-of-meditation>

health benefits

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

2%

INTERNET SOURCES

0%

PUBLICATIONS

6%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Submitted to National University

Student Paper

3%

2

Submitted to Kaplan University

Student Paper

1%

3

Submitted to Southern New Hampshire University - Continuing Education

Student Paper

1%

4

www.duo.uio.no

Internet Source

1%

5

Submitted to Timber Creek High School

Student Paper

<1%

6

Submitted to State College of Florida, Manatee - Sarasota (formerly, Manatee Community College)

Student Paper

<1%

Exclude quotes Off

Exclude bibliography On

Exclude matches Off

