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EFFECT OF RAJYOGI LIFESTYLE ON ALCOHOL DE-ADDICTION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Retrospective Study of 696 persons with various addictions,who were dependent on Alcohol were studied for the effect of Rayogi Lifestyle and were found to respond very positively, minimal duration required to give up and almost no relapse when they followed all aspects of the Rajyogi Lifestyle (early morning meditation (amritvela), evening meditation, meditation before sleep, daily positive thinking and knowledge classes (murli), practice of control of thoughts at prefixed timings (Traffic Control), satwik diet and soul consciousness).

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this paper is to study the effectiveness of a spiritually augmented lifestyle to help the individual give up Alcohol.

METHOD: One to one interview method was used for data collection. Consent was obtained from all the 696 persons participating in the study. The participants were spread across 25 states and one Union Territories of India. Management and analysis of the data was carried out by professionals at Medical Wing Research Office located at Shantivan Complex, Abu Road.

RESULT: It was observed that after following Rajyogi Lifestyle regularly, of the 696 persons, who were dependent on Alcohol,64.35% were able to give up alcohol within one month; 9.48% within six months, 12.21% within an year quit while 14.08% took more than an year to quit Alcohol.

CONCLUSION: Rajyogi lifestyle is associated with health promoting behaviors. The findings of this study conclude that Rajyogi Lifestyle is effective in management and relapse prevention of alcohol abuse.

KEYWORDS

Rajyoga, Rajyogi Lifestyle, De-addiction, Meditation, Alcoholism

INTRODUCTION

The significance of spirituality and lifestyle modification as contributors to and treatment for multiple psychopathologies, for fostering individual and social well-being and for safe-guarding and enhanc in gcognitive function were established on numerous occasions by various scientists everywhere throughout the world.It has been observed that rehabilitation programs emphasis on medication and rehabilitation measures like counselling, religious prayers sessions, hobby pursuance and nutritional measures (Mathew Anand, Dr. Jagatheesan Alagesan, Dr. S Prathap 2013).

Unlike other forms of spiritually augmented lifestyles, Rajyoga meditation practiced as part of Rajyogi lifestyle follows the natural flow of the mind. It teaches that the inner change has to occur at the level of mind to eliminate unwanted behaviours and to achieve a state of peace of mind. Concentration is not on the object or mantra but on the positive qualities of the inner self or soul – the part of mind that includes realization, feeling, will, thought, consciousness, intellect and judgment (BK Jayanti, 2000).[1] Elevated anxiety levels which precede alcohol abuse, a major factor in relapse, are reduced through daily meditation practice (Pemell, 2003).[2] An added benefit is the natural feeling of bliss resulting from meditation experiences.

One of the key variables that arise in Rajyoga practitioners is that they experience peace of mind (O'Donnell, 2000, BKRY, 1988).[3,4] Rajyoga is very much about retraining the mind in the direction of greater positivity and peace, to counter negative habits of thought and personality traits which make up the "*alcohol addictive personality*". Awareness is a key factor in this process of recovery. The mind is trained to think before acting and to use the intellect to sift through thought and allow only what is positive and conducive to addiction free life.

Background

The number of incidents of alcohol abuse amongst teenagers is on the rise in comparison to previous years. More and morepeople at younger age seem to be abusing alcohol. The same trend is being seen in other age groups as well.There were a number of studies on alcohol abusers spiritual orientation whose findings reflect a positive relationship to recovery. Piedmont (2004) evaluated a group of abstinent drug abusers who had entered a spirituality oriented ambulatory program of 8 weeks duration. Of those who completed the program, the ones who had higher pretreatment spirituality had higher scores on well-being and less psychiatric symptomatology after completion (no indication of final drug-free status was given).[5]Polcin and Zemore (2004) and Zemore and Kaskutas (2004) studied ambulatory patients who were predominantly drawn from AA meetings by applying a multidimensional measurement of religiousness/spirituality, and they found that those AA members who had longer periods of sobriety reported a greater level of spirituality at the time of evaluation.[6,7] Magura et al. (2003) reported that responses on a 12-item Spirituality Well-Being scale were not associated with increased abstinence, but were associated with health-promoting behaviors such as "taking care of yourself" and "getting enough sleep".[8]

Literature Review

Meditation

The Englishword meditation is derived from the Latin verb 'meditārī', meaning "to think or reflect upon, consider, contemplate, devise, ponder" (Oxford Dictionary). Healing also comes from the same root word. Addictions are manifestations of not only the fragmentation within the personality but also within society. Addiction is thought to be a spiritual sickness which can be healed by meditation within a faith context.

The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices (much like the term sports) that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force (qi, ki, prana, etc.) and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness.[9] A especial type of meditation aims at easily sustained single-pointed concentration meant to enable its practitioner to appreciate an indestructible feeling of well-being while participating in any life activity. Meditation often involves an internal effort to self-regulate the mind in some way. Meditation is often used to clear the mind and ease many health issues, such as high blood pressure,as well as[10]depression, and anxiety.

Prezioso (1987), claims that the importance of spirituality is most clearly evident in the lives of substance abusers. The literature reports that positive spirituality helps alcoholics shift to an acknowledgment of the larger dimensions of their lives and while the specific elements of this transition are not well understood, spirituality clearly plays a part in successful outcomes (Pardini et al., 2000; Booth & Martin, 1998).[11] Relapse prevention (RP) programs, based on the principles of

social learning theory by Bandura; combines behavioral skills-training procedures, cognitive therapy and lifestyle rebalancing. Within lifestyle rebalancing, meditation and physical exercise are used to enhance the maintenance of behavior change in the direction of better personal habits to prevent relapse (Marlatt & George, 1998).[12]

The meditation referred to in this study is taught in the context of the lived faith or lifestyle by Rajyoga as taught by Brahma Kumaris. This is in keeping with the hypothesis that meditation is most efficacious when practiced in its spiritual context.

Rajyogi Lifestyle

The practice of Rajyogi Lifestyle consists of early morning meditation (amrit vela), Evening Meditation, Meditation before sleep, daily positive thinking and knowledge classes (murli), Practice of control of thoughts at prefixed timings (traffic control), satwik diet and soul consciousness.

One of the key variables that arise in Rajyoga practitioners is that they experience peace of mind (O'Donnell, 2000, BKRY, 1988).[3,4] They do not get this from just a meditation technique but from the experience of peace in meditation being applied to everyday life and in stressful situations. Awareness is a key factor in this process of recovery. The mind is trained to think before acting and to use the intellect to sift through thought and allow only what is positive and conducive to peace. Meditation is the key factor in Rajyogi lifestyle.

Aim & Objectives

Alcoholism has been a social, psychological and medical problem worldwide.[1]The aim of this paper is to study the effectiveness (retrospectively in those who are alcohol free), of a spiritually augmented lifestyle - Rajyogi Lifestyle in promotion of alcohol free healthy lifestyle that is flexible, compatiblewith daily life, easily adhered to and result oriented among different ages, races and ethnicity.

METHODOLOGY

The current, more detailed, in-depth study, "Effect of RajyogiLifestyle on alcohol de-addiction in India" was carried out after obtaining consent of 1021 persons with abuse of various substances (of whom 696 were abusing alcohol) spread across 25 states and 2 Union Territories of India. The study was carried out by trained interviewers who administered the Performa on adults who volunteered to give this information confidentially (through coding), after giving consent to be a part of the study. The study was carried out after obtaining permission of Scientific Committee of Medical Wing of Rajyoga Education and Research Foundation and Ethical Committee of J.W. Global Hospital and Research Centre, Mount Abu. The Performa, filled in English and Hindi was orally administered in almost all major languages of India as the participants involved hailed from different parts of the country and had varying levels of education.The information was collected in one-on-one interviews, after signed consent by the person being studied and all the details of the person being available for verification if required. All the persons in the study were not suffering from any mental illness and were fit to give consent and information at the time of the study.

The data was collected on one to one interview basis directly by the investigators or trained volunteers.

Data was managed centrally at Medical Wing Research Office located at Shantivan Complex, Abu Road, Rajasthan and analysis done by independent analysts who were blind to the participants.

Results of effect of Rajyogi Lifestyle on alcohol de-addiction

In the present study of 696 person, 691 were males (99.28%), 603 (86.64%) being married at the time interviewed, in the age group 19 years to 80 years (mean 50.38, SD 13.05, $p < 0.0001$), only about 32 being illiterate, while 107 being graduate/post graduate and rest having studied up to some level, more than 99.85% employed in different professions/trades while only 1 person wasunemployed ($p < 0.0001$); 64.66% urban and 35.34% rural; belonging to 25 states and one union territory, thus having pan India representation.

The effect of Rajyogi Lifestyle has been studied by seeing the range of scores given for its practice. Thus, 0-4 scores were given on four subjects each (never, occasionally, once or twice/week, most days in a week and daily) for early morning meditation (amritvela meditation), evening meditation, meditation before sleep and knowledge class (murli) for cognitive behavioral change through self reflection (total 0-16 points). 0-3 scores were given on three subjects each as a range (never, occasionally, most of the time and daily) for traffic control (self checking of thoughts and behavior at pre-fixed timings), imbibing of pure food (satwik diet) and soul consciousness stage (total 0-9 points). Thegrand total for the practice of Rajyogi Lifestyle was 16+9=25, higher the score, better the adherence to Rajyogi Lifestyle.

The population studied reported about 57% of those studied adhering to more than 80% (20-25 points); 33% of those studied to 60%-80% adherence (15-20 points) about 6% of those studied in 40-60% adherence (10-15 points) and 2% of those studied between 20-40% adherence (5-10 points) and 2% less than 20% adherence (0-5 points). Average age of subjects whose adherence score is 60% or above was 41.92 years.

Followings are the results of de-addiction of alcohol in 696 persons studied who followed Rajyogi lifestyle:

Substance Abuse Status - Alcohol			
		#	%
	N	696	
Period of Addiction (Years)	Minimum	1 month	
	Maximum	62 years	
	Mean	15.32	
	SD	10.91	
Time taken to de-addict (in months)	< 1 month	447	64.22
	1-6 months	66	9.48
	7-12 months	85	12.21
	> 12 months	98	14.08
Withdrawal Symptoms		6	0.86
Relapse		29	4.17
P		< 0.0001	

It is also note worthy that about half (49%) had tried to give up addictions before embarking on Rajyogi Lifestyle, the frequency range being 1 to 30 attempts, mean being 5.31 times. The attempts to give up were by 'self-imposed discipline/will power' in 70% of those who attempted, through religious practices 6%, alternate substances 5% and medication 4%. These did not bear fruit for long and the persons relapsed.

Limitations of the study

The present study was a retrospective study conducted on persons following Rajyogi Lifestyle. A multi-centric prospective study can be conducted on persons volunteering for Rajyogi Lifestyle to get rid of alcohol abuse, to further authenticate.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study conclude that unique, user-friendly, healthy, spiritually augmented Rajyogi Lifestyle is effective for alcohol de-addiction and as it helps people to stay away from alcoholfor longer duration, it can also be used as a conjunctive therapy in relapse prevention.Development of alcohol abuse in adolescence has been related both with peer pressure and exposure to drug-using peers, both of which may imply deficits in specific social skills as refusal. Rajyogi Lifestyle seems to be helping people in two distinct orientations. The first; tries to promote the acquisition of social skills directly related with situations that may contribute to the initiation of the subjects drug use. In this case, the objective is to help the subject to refuse the offer of a drug in a specific social context. The second orientation; stresses the development of positive social skills, which may have a general positive impact upon personal development, thus preventing the contact of the subject with alcohol abuse.

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