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Correspondence

Comments on “Yoga: From cardiovascular benefit to the gates of God”



Keywords:

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Dear Editor,

The musings 'Yoga: From cardiovascular benefit to the gates of God' makes a very interesting reading in the backdrop of International Yoga Day.¹ Physicians primary responsibility is to keep people physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy, not necessarily near the 'gates of God'. Practice of yoga in its true spirit, as enshrined by Patanjali some 5000 years ago, will certainly help us in getting rid of the current epidemic of lifestyle-related noncommunicable diseases. Yoga (Ashtanga yoga) comprises of eight steps: Yama (universal ethics), Niyama (individual ethics), Asana (physical postures), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (control of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (bliss). The best definition of yoga for health purposes is given in Bhagavad Gita as: appropriate diet, adequate exercise, right discharge of duties, early to bed, and early to rise.^{2,3} These basic tenets of yoga tally very well with the recommendation of many professional bodies, like Cardiologist Society of India, American Heart Association, British Cardiac Society, etc.

It is well known that human body is composed of trillion of microscopic cells, which are the building blocks of systems and organs. Cells get tired and exhausted after daily wear and tear. A time comes when they die also and new cells take their place so that our vitality is restored. Exercise and yoga is one such economical and easy method of recharging the tired and exhausted cells. It looks anachronistic to think that exercise would provide energy to the tired cells. Further, yoga functions like a computer. Both have a hardware and software. Essential hardware for yoga are 'yam', 'niyam', and 'asanas'. Essential Software are 'pranayam', 'dharana', and 'dhyana'. To achieve maximum benefits from yoga one has to have a perfect coordination between these two components of yoga. It is thus evident that if someone follows ethics appropriately, eats

healthy food, does exercise and pranayam daily, discharges his prescribed duties, and follows the natural biological rhythm of sleep and awakening, he can be said to be following yoga principles appropriately. Then there will be fewer chances of falling sick with hypertension or coronary artery disease (CAD).⁴

Shall we say that yoga as described above is an efficient, economical, and an integrated tool for preventing lifestyle-related cardiovascular diseases, like hypertension and CAD.⁵

Conflicts of interest

The author has none to declare.

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