UNIT 4 : YOGA THERAPY FOR COMMON DISEASES

UNIT STRUCTURE

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to –

- state the causes of Common Disorders
- state the symptoms of Common Disorders
- suggest Yoga therapy for Common Disorders.

4.2 YOGA FOR ARTHRITIS

Introduction

Arthritis is one of the most common of all disabling diseases, afflicting an estimated one out of ten people. It is inflammation of the synovial joints of the body. The condition is characterized by pain, swelling, redness, heat and loss of function in one or more joints. Most affected joints are, the weight bearing joints of spine, hips, knees ankles and the small joints responsible for repeated, finely articulated movement, such as the fingers. Modern medical science has recognised several distinct forms of arthritis. Most common forms of Arthritis are-

- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Osteo-Arthritis
- Gouty Arthritis

From the Yogic point of view, these are different stages of the same basic blockage of prana rather than different diseases.

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

This is severe, crippling and rapidly progressive form of joint degeneration often found in young and middle aged people. It is found more in women than men. Inflammatory changes bring about the structural deformities as a result of autoimmune reaction. Therefore, Rheumatoid arthritis is an auto immune disorder. It involves mainly the small joins of the body like finger, wrist, elbow, neck, toes, ankles etc.

Causes

Specific cause of rheumatoid arthritis is not known. Usually this disease is observed in such patients whose body's accumulation of morbid matter is of acidic nature. According to Yoga and Naturopathy wrong eating, living and thinking habits are the principle causes of this painful disease. Severe emotional shock and stress may trigger it. The changes in joints are due to an antigen- antibody reaction of own body tissue.

Sign and Symptoms

- Swelling and pain give rise to restriction of joint movement.
- Pain becomes localized with fever and malaise.
- Morning stiffness
- Stiffness in joints
- Inability to move
- Cracking sound in joints

OSTEO-ARTHRITIS

This is due to chronic degenerative condition of bones. It is commonly seen in middle and old age people. It is related with the degeneration of articular cartilage of the weight bearing joints or formation of osteophytes.

Causes

Overweight due to wrong diet, lack of exercise, calcium deficiency,

imbalance in the parathyroid function, mental and emotional stress, and sedentary life style and wear and tear of the joint tissue from early injury to joint or osteophytes formation are the major causes.

Symptoms

There is a stiffness, pain and loss of flexibility of the joint

GOUTY ARTHRITIS

This chronic or acute form of arthritis is associated with gout due to metabolic disorder.

Joint or big toe is the most susceptible part. In chronic cases it damages the kidneys.

Causes

Excessive uric acid accumulated in the blood and deposits of urates of sodium around the joints.

Excessive consumption of red meat and coffee.

Sign and Symptoms

Fever, headache, tenderness, swelling and formation of nodes of the joints. Patient will complain restricted and painful movements. Skin becomes tense, reddish and warm. Pain increases at night.

YOGIC MANAGEMENT OF ARTHRITIS

In the science of Yoga, Arthritis is not considered to be a disease in itself, but rather as one of a widespread metabolic and pranic malfunction which begins early in a person's life. Yoga offers a way to arrest this process. In fact, in the early stages, before irreversible damage to the joints has occurred, a complete reversal is often possible. In the later stages, yogic practices can reduce drug dependency, maximize remaining mobility and function in the joints.

Yogic management of arthritic process is all-embracing and effectively complements standard medical measures. A well- rounded program of Yogic therapy includes the following elements-

Shat-karma:

Shat-karma are important in alleviating constipation and eliminating any metabolic acids and other wastes which accumulate in the joints, bloodstream and tissues.

Neti, Kunjal and Shankha-prakshalana will be effective for Arthritis.

Asana:

The major series of asana for prevention and management of arthritic condition is the anti- rheumatic group of pawanmuktasana, which puts the body through its full range of movements and fully relaxes and massages all the joints. As the flexibility of the joints increases, other asanas can be added-

Tadasana, Tiryak-tadasana, Marjari-asana, Akarna Dhanurasana, Vakrasana, Ardha-halasana.

Pranayama:

Pranayama practices can bolster the digestive and eliminative capacities.

Nadi-shodhana, Bhastrika pranayama can be effective for Arthritis.

Meditation:

Meditation releases pent-up mental and emotional tensions which is beneficial in Arthritic condition.

Om recitation.

Diet:

- Take a simple and light diet.
- Avoid sour fruits, curd, pickles, spices, milk and dairy products.
- Eat fresh fruits.

4.3 YOGA FOR ASTHMA

It is primarily a disease of the respiratory system. In Asthma, patient has more difficulty in expiration than inspiration. It is common to all ages, children and adolescents of both sexes, irrespective of socio- economic background. It is characterized by recurrent attacks of spasm of the tubes of the lungs resulting in wheezing, coughing and a sense of suffocation. The bronchi constrict and become plugged with excessive, thick mucus secretions. Attacks of asthma may last for a minute, or may continue for hours or even days, leaving the sufferer in a stage of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

Causes

The cause of asthma may be psychological, hereditary and allergic.

At the psychological level, suppression of negative emotions such as jealousy, anger, resentment and hatred are often precipitating causes.

Also, loneliness, emotional hypersensitivity, longing for affection, fear of rejection and hesitation are the other precipitating factors.

The allergic factors may be pollen grains, food products, drugs, medicine, dust, animal hair, air pollution, industrial smoke, diesel fumes, milk and dairy products.

According to Yoga and Naturopathy, the cause of Asthma is digestive disorders, stress and tension.

Constipation and indigestion may be associated with accumulation of toxins leading to asthmatic attack.

Likewise, unhealthy diet and lifestyle also play a role in the genesis of asthma.

Signs and Symptoms

- Nasal irritation
- Breathlessness at the time of attack
- Heaviness in chest with wheezing
- Distended abdomen
- Uneasiness in body and increase in palpitation
- Cold/ running or blocked nose
- Cough with or without phlegm
- Weakness
- Breathing trouble during sleep
- Nails and lips become blue indicating less oxygen supply
- Eosinophil count in blood increases

Yogic Management of Asthma

In the management of asthma through Yoga, their psychic factors should be brought before their conscious mind. So, the sufferer will learn to recognize, accept and then gradually he will be able to resolve these difficulties.

An essential part of yogic management is restoration of depleted

and blocked pranic energy channels. This can be achieved through Shat-karmas, Yogasanas and Pranayamas in attack free condition. Yogic practices reduce the intensity of attack and increase the gap between two attacks. It relieves constipation, reduces hyperacidity and enhances the stamina, endurance.

Shat-Karma-

Neti, Vaman dhauti, Vastra dhauti, Shankha- prakshalana, Kapalbhati, Agnisara.

These are the most important part of the therapy. Warm saline water is effective in dissolving and removing accumulated mucous wastes from the nasal mucous membranes, the respiratory tract, the stomach and lower digestive tract. Neti Kriya removes obstructions from the nasal passages and allows nasal breathing. Vaman dhauti and Vastra dhauti are effective in removing the accumulated mucus from the stomach and respiratory tract. But Vastra dhauti should be practiced under expert guidance. Shankha- prakshalana is important in eliminating constipation and restoring the asthmatic's depleted digestive energy.

Asanas

Suryanamaskar, tadasana, Tiryak- tadasana, Kati- Chakrasana, Vajrasana, Gomukhasana, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Ushtrasana, Marjari asana, Makarasana, Sarvangasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana, Shavasana.

These asanas help to reshape the chest, promote the flow of inhibited and blocked nervous energy.

Pranayamas

Nadi-shodhan, Suryabhedi and Bhastrika Pranayama

Nadi shodhan develops awareness and control over the breath. Bhastrika strengthens the lungs and develops respiratory capacity.

Mudra-Bandha

Uddiyana Bandha is beneficial in Asthma.

Meditation

Ajapa Japa, Om recitation

Diet

- Avoid cold drinks and sudden exposure to cold weather.
- Mucus forming foods such as rice, sweets, and dairy products should be avoided.
- Heavy, oily and dried foods should not be taken.
- All chemically treated, processed, flavoured and preserved foods, as well as any foods which are known to initiate an allergic reaction, should be avoided.
- Have the heavier meal at lunch time and a small light meal in the evening.
- Take wholemeal grains and pulses in place of meat and eggs.

4.4 YOGA FOR BACKACHE

Backache is one of the most common disorders which indicate pain anywhere in the back region. There is dull, continuous pain and tenderness in the back muscles, especially in the lumber, lumbo-sacral or in the upper region of the spine.

Causes

- Causes of backache are varied such as Spondylosis, Spondylitis, slipped disc, strain, sprain, spasm and weak abdominal or back muscles.
- The main reason for these conditions is a faulty posture of the person during activities like standing, sitting, working, lifting the weight, walking, sleeping etc.
- Standing or sitting for long time
- Long driving sessions without a break
- Backache may also be due to structural changes in spine due to accident.
- It can be referred pain due to diseases of internal organs like pelvic infection of the uterus or fallopian tube and ovary.
- Psychological problems like tension, stress, anxiety, depression can also lead to backache.
- Heavy muscular work may result in backache.

- Obesity and overweight give extra load to spine which gives rise to backache.

Sign and symptoms

- Pain in the affected region of back
- Pain radiates in hands and legs with heaviness, numbness, tingling sensation
- Pain radiates down the leg
- Difficulty in sitting, standing, bending, lifting, walking and sleeping comfortably
- Spasm of muscle

Yogic management of Backache

Yogic practices increase the functional efficiency of the various muscle groups responsible for the backache.

Asanas-

Tadasana, Tiryak- Tadasana, Kati- Chakrasana, Parvatasana, Vakrasana, Marjari- asana, Gomukhasana, Ushtrasana, Makarasana, Kandharasana, Bhujangasana, Ardha- Shalabhasana and Shavasana

Pranayama

Nadi- shodhan Pranayama

Om recitation

4.5 YOGA FOR CONSTIPATION

Constipation is very common disorder of lower digestive system in which the elimination of solid wastes from the body becomes slow and requires force. It may be due to sluggish action of the bowels.

Causes

- There are number of factors responsible for constipation. They include-
- Lack of physical exercise
- Sedentary life-style
- Poor diet habits- eating too much, too often or irregularly, improper chewing due to hurried eating, oily and spicy heavy food
- Psychological conditions- grief, anger, irritation etc.

- Use of inadequate green vegetables and seasonal fruits
- Less water intake

Sign and Symptoms

- Passing dry and hard stool
- Strain while passing the stools
- Improper evacuation of faecal matter
- Dizziness and heaviness in the head
- Person suffering from chronic constipation may develop piles

Yogic management of Constipation

Yogic practices along with proper diet and adequate intake of water are helpful to relieve the constipation.

Shat- Karma

Vaman dhauti, Laghoo Shankh- Prakshalana, Agnisara, Nauli, Kapalabhati.

Asana

Surya Namaskra, Tadasana, Tiryak- Tadasana, Kati- Chakrasana, Trikonasana, Pada- Hastasana, Vajrasana, Vakrasana, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Pavanmuktasana, Udarakarshasana, Vipareet karani asana, Makarasana, Shavasana.

Pranayama

Nadi Shodhana, Surya Bhedan, Bhastrika Pranayama.

Mudra- Bandha

Yoga Mudra, Ashwini Mudra, Uddiyana Bandha, Maha Bandha

Diet

- Include fruits, vegetables, lots of salads and bean sprouts, whole grain in the diet
- Drink plenty of fluids including fresh juices
- Reduce the intake of salt

Other

- Daily Satsang, study of holy books and prayer to God
- Ushapan (taking water) in the morning followed by Tadasana, Tiryak-Tadasana and Kati- Chakrasana.

4.6 YOGA FOR MENSTRUAL DISORDERS

Menstruation, also known as a period is the regular discharge of bloody fluid from the uterus through the vagina. The menstrual period lasts about five days. The periodicity of the menstrual cycle averages 28 days. A menstrual disorder is an abnormal condition in a woman's menstrual cycle. Disturbances of the menstrual functions are common. The common menstrual disorders are- Amenorrhea, Menorrhagia, Metrorrhagia, Dysmenorrhoea, and Leucorrhoea.

Amenorrhea is the absence of menstruation. It may be caused by hormonal deficiency or hormonal imbalance, change of the environment, obesity, diet, extreme weight loss, stress and worry, fear and anxiety etc.

Menorrhagia is the medical term for excessive bleeding during menstruation, in terms of more days as well as the amount of blood. It may cause due to disturbances in pituitary, thyroid and ovary functions, hypertension and diabetes mellitus.

Metrorrhagia is another medical term for excessive flow of blood occurring between two menstrual periods. It may cause due to poor functioning of ovaries, pituitary and thyroid glands, poor blood clotting function, lesions of the cervix and some physiological factors.

Dysmenorrhoea is also a medical term for pain and discomfort felt prior to the onset of or at the time of menstruation. Discomfort is mainly in the lower abdomen, pain in thighs. Dysmenorrhoea may cause due to anatomical malfunction like underdeveloped womb, hormonal disturbances, pathological changes in pelvis and mental factors.

Leucorrhoea is medical term used for whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge. It is normal during the first half of the cycle. However, an excessive white discharge becomes the problem when it is associated with irritation or itching.

Causes

- Hormonal imbalance
- Faulty development of reproductive organs
- Psychological disturbances like depression, fear, stress and mental

tension

- Wrong living, eating and thinking habits
- Intake of heavy, oily, spicy and fried food
- Absence of physical exercise

Sign and Symptoms

- Irregular periods
- Pain during menstrual cycle
- Heavy and scanty bleeding
- Backache during menstrual cycle
- Pain and heaviness in head
- Irritability and tension
- Loss of appetite and
- weakness

Yogic management of Menstrual Disorders

Yoga helps in the management of menstrual disorders by correcting and balancing the functioning of the endocrine system. Yoga relaxes the body and mind thereby reduces the psychological problems.

Shat-karma

Neti (daily), Kunjal (Twice a week), Laghoo shakha- prakshalana (once a month).

Kunjal and Laghoo shankh- prakshalana help to relieve constipation which is an initial step in relieving menstrual disorders.

Asanas

Asanas are helpful to preserve the general health and to reduce the minor complaints regarding menstruation by improving the vigour and strength of the body. Following asanas are recommended for menstrual disorders-

Tadasana, Tiryak- tadasana, Kati- chakrasana, Surya- Namaskara, Trikonasana, Vajrasana, Shashankasana, Ushtrasana, Vakrasana, Gomukhasana, Ardha- Matsyendrasana, Marjari- asana, Bhujangasana, Ardha- Shalabhasna, Halasana, Sarvangasana and Shavasana.

Inverted asanas are particularly recommended as they promote drainage of the reproductive organs and enhance pituitary blood flow. They

should be avoided only on the days of menstrual cycle.

Pranayama

Nadi- Shodhana, Shitali, Ujjayi, Bhramari and Bhastrika.

Pranayama removes psychic tensions and mental irritability. Bhastrika enhances vitality and eliminates toxins and is recommended in cases of amenorrhoea and dysmenorrhoea.

Mudra- Bandha

Vipareeta karani mudra, Yoga mudra, Ashwini Mudra, Maha mudra, Uddiyana Bandha, Moola Bandha.

Ashwini mudra and moola bandha generate vital energy in the reproductive organs. They also stimulate the pelvic nerves.

Meditation

Ajapa japa, Nada Yoga.

Meditation is helpful in relieving stress from the mind.

Diet

- Food should be very simple, free from spices and simultaneously easily digestible.
- Green leafy vegetables and fruits should be taken in abundance in the meal.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks:

A. Most common forms of Arthritis are- Rheumatoid Arthritis, ... and Gouty Arthritis.

B. Asthma is primarily a disease of ..... system.

C. In constipation, elimination of solid wastes from the body becomes .....

D. ..... is the medical term for excessive bleeding during menstruation.

E. Ashwini mudra and moola bandha generate vital energy in the ..... organs.



4.7 LET US SUM UP

There are number of common diseases. Arthritis, Asthma, Constipation, Backache and menstrual disorders are some of the common among them. There are different causes and symptoms for each disease. The common causes among all are faulty life-style, food habits and lack of exercise. Yoga is recommended for the management of these diseases. Yoga enables positive thinking pattern, relieves stress and tension while Yogic practices like Asana and Pranayama are helpful in relieving blocked pranic energy. Shat- karma practices cleanse internal organs of the body like stomach, small intestine and large intestine and therefore beneficial in removing number of problems. Everyone should include Yoga regime as the part of their life to be free from disease.



4.8 FURTHER READING

1) *Yoga for common ailments*- Dr. R Nagarathna and Dr. H R Nagendra, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana: Bengaluru.
2) *Yoga Therapy for selected diseases*- Dr. M M Gore, Dr. D R Vaze, Dr. S A Kulkarni, Dr. J P Oak, Kaivalyadhama: Pune.
3) *Yogic management of Common Diseases*- Dr. Swami Karmananda, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger: Bihar
4) *Yogic and Naturopathic treatment for common ailments,* Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy: New Delhi.
5) *Yoga for Digestive Disorders,* Dr. R. Nagarathna and Dr. H R Nagendra, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana: Bengaluru.
6) *Yoga for Arthritis,* Dr. R. Nagarathna and Dr. H R Nagendra, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana: Bengaluru.

7) *Yoga for Bronchial Asthma,* Dr. R. Nagarathna and Dr. H R Nagendra, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana: Bengaluru.



4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: A. Osteo- Arthritis

B. Respiratory

C. Slow

D. Menorrhagia

E. Reproductive



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Discuss the causes and symptoms of Arthritis. Also suggest some Yogic practices for the management of Arthritis.

Q 2: Discuss the causes and symptoms and Yogic management of Asthma.

Q 3: Write the causes and symptoms of Backache. Also suggest some Yogic practices to relieve the backache.

Q 4: Discuss the causes and symptoms of Constipation. Also suggest some Yogic practices for the management of Constipation.

Q 5: Write in brief about the common menstrual disorders. Also write their common causes, symptoms and Yogic management.

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