

Meditation & medicine

Czaharyn, A. G., "A simple form of meditation for use in clinical practice [letter], " *Am Fam Physician*, vol. 53, pp. 2440-2, 1996.

Hassed, C., "Meditation in general practice, " *Aust Fam Physician*, vol. 25, pp. 1257-60, 1996.

Abstract:

Growing scientific evidence, clinical experience and community attitudes are encouraging a shift to more natural and holistic forms of therapy as alternatives or adjuncts to pharmacological approaches to a variety of conditions. Meditation and relaxation exercises have a wide range of applications but are especially useful in treating stress and related disorders. They are easily adapted to the general practice setting by adequately trained practitioners who have first hand experience of them. In this short article the practical and experiential aspects of such exercises are examined which, combined with examining the scientific evidence, provide a much more complete understanding of their potential uses and therapeutic effects.

Ramamurthi, B., "The fourth state of consciousness: the Thuriya Avastha, " *Psychiatry Clin Neurosci*, vol. 49, pp. 107-10, 1995.

Abstract:

Present day neurophysiology stops with attributing thinking processes as the highest level of function of the brain. It has been common knowledge to oriental thinkers for many centuries, that there are many further states of the human mind, culminating in the state of thoughtless awareness; the fourth state of consciousness. This state must have a physiological basis. The complicated structure of the brain, the extravagant abundance of neural and glial elements in the brain, the infinite possibilities of synaptic junctions and synaptic transmission, and the multitude of neurotransmitters and neuromodulators; all these point to the definite possibility of a much greater level of performance and achievement for the human brain than has been apparent so far. Not only the theories but also the experience of Eastern seers have shown that the brain can transcend the boundaries of logic and reason, and experience states of awareness, commonly unrecognized. In the past few decades, knowledge about the functioning of the human brain has been growing exponentially and scientists of diverse disciplines are concentrating on unraveling its mysteries. It is necessary for scientists to investigate this state with all available tools and find the neurophysiological basis of this state.

Solberg, E. E., Halvorsen, R., Sundgot-Borgen, J., Ingjer, F., Holen, A., "Meditation: a modulator of the immune response to physical stress? A brief report, " *Br J Sports Med*, vol. 29, pp. 255-7, 1995.

Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: To test the hypothesis that stress reducing techniques such as meditation alter immune responses after strenuous physical stress. METHODS: The hypothesis was tested by studying six meditating and six non-meditating male runners in a concurrent, controlled design. After a period of six months with meditation for the experimental group, blood samples were taken immediately before and after a maximum oxygen uptake test (VO₂max). RESULTS: The increase in CD8+ T cells after VO₂max was significantly less in the meditation group than in the control group (P = 0.04). The amount of CD2+ cells doubled after VO₂max, mainly because of a rise in the CD8+ fraction. CONCLUSIONS: Meditation may modify the suppressive influence of strenuous physical stress on the immune system.

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