Lowering pressure without medicine no longer a stretch

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Expert advises simple yoga and chanting for decreasing one’s blood pressure

Calming chants

A study conducted at the Advanced Centre for Yoga Therapy, Education and Research, showed that pranava pranayama, a yogic technique with chanting, could significantly lower blood pressure.

If you are suffering from hypertension, new research shows that a certain yoga posture could help you significantly lower your blood pressure fairly rapidly. The results can be seen with a very simple asana and just involves basic chanting, the study has found.

According to a study conducted at the Advanced Centre for Yoga Therapy, Education and Research (ACYTER), by Dr. Anandan Balayogi Bhavanani, pranava pranayama, when performed in the supine position, could significantly reduce systolic pressure, pulse pressure and mean pressure (diastolic pressure + 1/3 pulse pressure). These results were not observed when the subjects underwent what Dr. Bhavanani terms ‘sham relaxation’ — a technique where they were asked to lie down and relax various parts of their bodies.

According to Dr. Bhavanani, pranava pranayama is the practice of taking three slow and deep breaths followed by making a prolonged “aaa ooo mmm” sound when exhaling. This pranayama is typically done in a seated posture, but for the sake of this research he decided to experiment with it in a supine position to see if it was more effective.

For the purpose of the study, 29 subjects (15 male and 14 female), with the average age of 57 years, were chosen. All the subjects were undergoing treatment for hypertension and diabetes for more than three years. They were then divided into two groups. One group was asked to practice the pranava pranayama, while the other group underwent sham relaxation. Both these groups were asked to do the exercise for 10 minutes a day.

The pranava group was asked to practice shavasana — simple conscious resting for the first two and the last two minutes — and for the remaining six minutes they were asked to perform pranava pranayama in the supine position. The pre-relaxation and post-relaxation heart rate and blood pressure was taken from all of the patients and the required variables were calculated.

For the patients that underwent the sham relaxation, the results were not as striking as for those who performed the pranava relaxation, he said.

The ACYTER group is now conducting a similar research on the effect of pranava pranayama on patients who have suffered from stroke, he said.


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