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Frontiers

### Role of Yoga-nidra in Immunity Development

**Dr. Kamakhya Kumar** Head: Dep't. of Yoga, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar

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#### ABSTRACT

Immunity is the most relevant word to be discussed today. Now in the age of Corona pandemic when everyone knows that only a better immune system can protect you from this virus. However, it is quite relevant to discuss all its aspects including its importance and the techniques to boost it as well.

Stress may be the largest factor in determining our immunity and illness. When we become stressed, our immune system becomes less able to protect us. The stress hormone, corticosteroid, decreases, even suppresses the immune system by lowering the number of lymphocytes (white blood cells needed to fight off disease) in our system.

Studies conducted across the globe proves that Yogic relaxations techniques plays a vital role in increase the immunity. Yoga-nidra is probably best-known technique to induce complete physical mental and emotional relaxation. On the basis of such studies it can be concluded that Yoga-nidra having an important role in improving the immunity of the practitioners..

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#### Introduction

Immunity is that the balanced state of multicellular organisms having adequate biological defences to fight infection, disease, or other unwanted biological invasion, while having adequate tolerance to avoid allergy, and autoimmune diseases. There is a great connection between our immunity and relaxation.

Relaxation is the physiological as well as psychological requirement of the body. As we know sleep is not the wastage of time

at all. Sometimes due to REM Sleep this relaxation doesn't complete and we feel fatigue in the day time. Most of time we don't care but if this situation continues for a week or more it reflects into a psychosomatic disease. Pandya, P., and Kumar, K. 2007 states that practice of Yoga-nidra due to its relaxing effect is useful in Psycho-somatic health.

For the prevention and cure of such illnesses Yoga-nidra helps a lot; In real sense Yoga-nidra is a state of

consciousness, which is, neither sleep nor awoken, neither is it concentration nor hypnotism. It can be defined, as an altered state of consciousness. Yoga-nidra aims at the removal of the pratyaya (mental fluctuations) from the conscious or external plane, the subconscious or subtle plane and the unconscious and causal plane. Yoga-nidra is a state between sleep and Samadhi. It is a half sleep and half waking state. This simple and useful practice of the art of sleeping which the yogis know, could also be called psychic sleep. Kumar, K., and Joshi, B. 2009, practice of Yoga nidra with Pranakarshan Pranayama improves the Alpha EEG and GSR level of the practitioners. As an individual moves from a waking state to deep sleep, complex changes within the electrical activity of the brain occur. These changes can be measured with a precision and the resulting electroencephalogram (EEG) reveals much about the nature of sleep. As an individual falls asleep, the electrical activity of her or his brain changes in an orderly manner. When someone is fully awake and alert, the EEG contains many beta waves: relatively high frequency (14-30Hz), low voltage activity. As he enters a quite resting state (just after getting into bed for sleep or lying into shavasana for the practice of Yoga-nidra) beta waves are replaced by alpha waves: EEG activity that is somewhat lower in frequency (8-13Hz) but slightly higher in voltage. As he or she begins to fall asleep, alpha waves are replaced by even slower, delta waves seem to reflect the fact that increasingly large numbers of neurons are firing together, in a synchronized manner.

Meaning: There is no difference between the awakened and the dreaming states. The flow of the impulses of the unconscious mind generates dreams. The awakened

state too is a dreaming state for soul. In both the state, the soul remains the same. Dreams are usually the reflections of our memory and medium of expression of our inner tendencies, aspirations and reflections of the unconscious. The latter seems to figure beyond the limit of space and time. It may exhume the hidden memories of the past- including even the past lives - and express an equivalent in dreams. At an equivalent time, it's going to also reflect, as per its natural tendency, the experiences within the present conditions of the mind, body and surroundings. It is a state of pure consciousness, which transcends the inner and outer senses. The climax of Dhyana is Samadhi. In Indian tradition, it is used for inner soul growth. Western psychologists link it a special state of mind. The techniques and nature of meditation might vary but modern scientific researches validate and highlight its benefits. The practice of meditation helps in build up the coping ability. The practitioner of meditation slowly becomes conscious of the inherent dormant potentialities and thus prevents himself from becoming a victim of distress.

Kumar, K. 2013. The practice contrary allows one to attain a state of 'awakened' sleep. In this state, the body and therefore the external mind (and hence the thought process) are made to sleep as per the order of the inner will. The determination, the willpower of the individual self-remain active in this state and endeavour auto-suggestive experience of the power of the unconscious mind and its linkage with the soul.

According to Sw. Satyananda Saraswati 1975, Yoga-nidra may be a state of mind between wakefulness and dream. When someone practices Yoga-nidra he opens the deeper phases of the mind. During the

practice of Yoga-nidra the consciousness is at different levels.

Sometimes it's very on the brink of the senses and at others, it's at a really remote distance. When the consciousness is at a foreign distance. it's only possible to know through the auditory channels. During Yoga-nidra the consciousness is suspended for a couple of moments periodically, which suggests that it alternates between the subconscious and unconscious states.

#### **How to Practice**

For the practice of Yoga-nidra one should lie flat on his back and follow the spoken instruction of yoga instructor. it's convenient to use Yoga-nidra tape. During the practice there should be no movement by the practitioner, also as he should attempt to remain awake and conscious of every given instruction.

#### **Stepwise Technique of Yoga-nidra**

As per the technique described by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Yoga-nidra includes following steps:

- Preparation
- Resolution
- Body part awareness
- Breath awareness
- Opposite feeling
- Visualization
- Ending

#### **Significance of Different Steps of Yoga-nidra**

Preparation of the practice train our mind to overcome the external disturbances. Resolution helps the mind to determine one not to involve in obstacles. Body-part awareness relaxes the muscles systematically. Breath awareness lowers the Respiration rate/ pulse rate and ultimately the blood pressure. Opposite

sense of feeling trains the mind to cope-up with opposite situations. Visualization increase the creativity and vision in the practitioners. Ending of the practice induces the discipline in our life.

#### **Yoga-nidra and its Relation to Sleep**

As a person moves from a waking state to deep sleep, complex changes in the electrical activity of the brain occur. These changes can be measured with a precision and the resulting electroencephalogram (EEG) reveals much about the nature of sleep. As an individual falls asleep, the electrical activity of her or his brain changes in an orderly manner. When someone is fully awake and alert, the EEG contains many beta waves: relatively high frequency (14-30Hz), low voltage activity. As he enters a quite resting state (just after getting into bed for sleep or lying into shavasana for the practice of Yoga-nidra) beta waves replaced by alpha waves: EEG activity that is somewhat lower in frequency (8-13Hz) but slightly higher in voltage. As he or she begins to fall asleep, alpha waves are replaced by even slower, delta waves seem to reflect the fact that increasingly large numbers of neurons are firing together, in a synchronized manner.

#### **Immunity and Stress**

McEwen BS et.al 1993; Stress could also be defined as psycho-physiological process usually experienced as a negative spirit. it's a standard condition, a response to a physical threat or psychological distress that generates a number of chemical and hormonal reactions within the body. The health effects of stress involve mainly autonomic, cardiovascular, and immune systems.

Solomon GF et.al 1964: Studies have shown that stress is related to increased latent viral reactivation, upper tract infection, and wound-healing time,

indicating that stress causes significant immune reaction dysfunction. George F. Solomon first demonstrated the influence of stress on immune reaction in animals and citizenry Deep Breathing. The longer you exhale, the more signals your brain receives to initiate the parasympathetic systema nervosum, the Calm Brain response. When the Calm Brain is turned on, the strain Response is turned off. This causes the guts rate and vital sign to lower. There are a few of the way to show on the Calm Brain through the breath: Rest! Sleep and rest can't be underestimated. Once you sleep, your system releases proteins that assist you sleep and fight infections. Not enough sleep and your ability to fight disease and get over illness is reduced. one among the simplest ways to urge rest is thru the practice of Yoga-nidra.

Anti-Stress Mechanism of Yoga-nidra Gallois PH et.al.1984: there's preliminary evidence that relaxation therapy may influence endocrine function and counter balance stress-induced endocrine changes. one among the study reflects that practice of Yoga-nidra reduces the strain and anxiety of the practitioners (Kumar, K. 2008 a) at an equivalent time another study shows that one can complete the course of roll in the hay the assistance of Yoga-nidra (Kumar, K. 2008. Whitehouse WG et.al. 1996: Stress management is required for medical students to decrease depression and anxiety, and to enhance sensitivity toward themselves, peers, and fogeys. Kumar K

2007 & 2012: Yoga-nidra is a scientific relaxation technique established in India, which provides the practitioner not only a healthy body but also a sound mind. Yoga-nidra has been shown to possess effects on most physiological systems of the body. Among the varied biochemical effects of it, a rise in blood cells and reduce in E.S.R levels.

#### **Discussion**

Practice of Yoga-nidra reduces psychological complications (Kumar, K. 2010 a) Aravind Gopal 2011, the buffering effect of yoga on stress-induced decrease in cellular immunity may be due to its ameliorating action on HPA, creating an optimized secretion of cortisol. Yoga also restores the autonomic reflex regulatory mechanisms, creating a balance between sympathetic and parasympathetic limbs in the presence of a stressor which probably prevents the impairment of cell-mediated immunity as reflected in IFN- $\gamma$  levels.

#### **Conclusion**

Relaxation helps lower stress hormones that compromise the immune system, while also conditioning the lymphatic system to oust toxins from the body, and bringing oxygenated blood to the various organs to ensure their optimal function. Yoga-nidra is probably the best-known technique of relaxation and helps in lead to a stress-free life (Kumar, K. 2010 b). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong connection between Yoga-nidra in developing the immunity in the practitioners.

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