

Practices of Yoga in cardiovascular health

Karunaratne HKBMS

Department of Cikitsa, Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute, University of Kelaniya, Yakkala.

Abstract

Every year a large number of people die due to the complications of cardiovascular diseases such as heart failure, heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, peripheral artery disease and sudden cardiac arrest. Healthy eating, meditation and exercise are recommended lifestyle choices to prevent and reverse heart disease (American Heart Association). Increased blood pressure and cholesterol levels are major causes for cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, suitable practices of Yoga are very important to avoid these two major causes and prevent from mental stress. This study was conducted as a literature survey based on Hatha Yoga Pradipika to investigate the suitable practices of Yoga in cardiovascular health (on prevention and cure). According to the findings of the present study, 72% of Yoga Asanas (Yogic postures), 62.5% of Pranayama (Yogic breathing) exercises, 66.66% of Shat Karmas (purification techniques in Yoga) and 40% of Mudras (gestures) adopted during Asana, Pranayama and meditation that directs flow of energy into human body) and Bandhas (techniques used in Hatha Yoga associated with the practice of Yogic exercises and Asanas including muscular lock) were beneficial in preventing as well as curing cardiovascular diseases. Siddhasana, Gomukasana, Padma Mayurasana, Vajrasana and Bhadrasana have special effects in maintaining a healthy cardio vascular system. Nadi Shodhana Pranayama (alternate nostril breathing), Surya Bhedana Pranayama (right nostril breathing) and Ujjayi (conqueror breath pose) were found to be examples for suitable breathing exercises. Shambhavi Mudra (eyebrow center gazing), Nasikagra Mudra (nose tip gazing) and Bhramari (humming bee) Mudra were found to be suitable practices for cardiovascular health according to the results of the present study.

Keywords: Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha.

Corresponding E-mail: minrupa@yahoo.com