

“YOGA FOR PROMOTION OF HEALTH”: CONFERENCE HELD ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA-2015 AT KOLAR

Yoga, an ancient science originated in India and over the march of time transcended its geographical boundaries. Hundreds of studies conducted under rigorous scientific protocols across the globe have established many preventive, promotive, and curative health benefits, especially for psychosomatic ailments. Yoga, through “Yogah chitta vritti nirodhah” (voluntary mastery over the modifications of the mind) ushers in harmony and peace, considered highly relevant and important in today’s world.

In recognition of the benefits of yoga in physical, mental, social, and spiritual spheres, the 69th United Nations General Assembly endorsed the decision to celebrate 21st June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). Responding to the clarion call given by the Union Government of India to celebrate the IDY in a befitting way, Department of Integrative Medicine of Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research (SDUAHER), Kolar, Karnataka, India, in association with its National Service Scheme wing organized a conference on 20th June 2015 at the Silver Jubilee Auditorium of the academy with the theme “Yoga for Promotion of Health.”

The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Subramanya K. Prof. and Dean, Division of Yoga and Humanities, SVYASA, Yoga University, Bengaluru, India. The same was attended by Dr. PF Kotur, Vice Chancellor, SDUAHER, Dr. AVM Kuttu, Registrar, SDUAHER, Dr. MB Sanikop, Principal, Sri Devaraj Urs Medical College (SDUMC), Kolar, and other dignitaries. Students and staff from nearby medical and nursing colleges also attended the function. During the inaugural session, Dr. Subramanya K., in his keynote address lucidly narrated the essentials of Ashtanga Yoga (Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi).^[1] He emphasized the importance of discipline (Yama and Niyama) for health and harmony. Dr. PF Kotur, Vice Chancellor, SDUAHER, in his presidential address emphasized the need for yoga in the context of the high prevalence of lifestyle disorders at the current time. He appreciated leading universities

across the globe for focusing on the various facets of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), as well as integrative medicine, and their efforts toward exploring their potential benefits.

In the second session, Dr. Shashikant Kumbar, Chief Yoga Therapy Consultant, Gunam Super Specialty Hospital, Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India, spoke on “Different Schools of Yoga.” He recounted that popularity of Yoga across the globe has led to the founding of several schools of yoga with each school emphasizing a particular component of the field (viz., asana - yogic postures; pranayama - yogic breathing; dhyana - meditation; relaxation techniques, etc.). He described different schools viz., Iyengar Yoga, Viniyoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, etc., and stressed the need for standardized yoga protocols.^[2] Dr. Nitin Patil, Assistant Prof., Department of Integrative Medicine, SDUAHER, demonstrated “Yoga Nidra” (a particular yogic relaxation technique). He stressed the positive impact of “Kirtan Kriya Meditation” on the frontal cortex, and posterior cingulate gyri of the brain, besides the other aspects of yoga.^[3]

The third session began with a talk by Dr. Vinutha Shankar, Prof. and Head, Department of Physiology, SDUMC, on “Physiology behind the positive impact of Yoga.” She explained the physiological benefits and advantages of yoga quoting relevant references from the contemporary scientific literature.^[4,5] Dr. Venkataratnamma PN, Prof., Department of Medicine, SDUMC, thereafter dealt with “Therapeutic benefits of Yoga” supported by scientific evidence from various studies conducted in India and abroad.^[6,7]

India has the potential to become a global leader in evidence-based integrative medicine, as it already has the well-established systems of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy as well as conventional medicine. The need of the hour is to enrich health care by integrating CAM with conventional medicine. SDUAHER has steadfastly pursued the novel idea of the integration of these systems, which marked its beginning through “SAMANVAYA—a conference on alternative medicine” in 2013.^[8] In realization of the merits of this

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integration, SDUMC—a constituent college of SDUAHER, has incorporated “Yoga therapy” in its conventional undergraduate medical curriculum (MBBS) since 2012, and by that claims to be the first medical college to have done so in India, if not in the world to be best of our knowledge. A DVD was released, containing text and video on the “Common Yoga Protocol” of IDY, and an exhibition on yoga therapy was set up to mark the occasion.

A plethora of literature has claimed that yoga is an evidence-based CAM for several psychosomatic, lifestyle, and chronic ailments. In current times, when a large part of the planet is undergoing a sociodemographic and disease transition with rising trends of the aforementioned-disorders, the need for integration of yoga as an auxiliary to conventional medicine cannot be over emphasized. Accordingly, a proclamation of the IDY should be considered an appropriate and timely intervention. It is high time that the merits of Yoga as an ancillary mode of therapy are recognized by the world community in general and conventional medical professionals in particular.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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